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New York

President:	Nana Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Estremé
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Anderson
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Ms. Tincopa
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) (S/2006/628)

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06-46776 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) (S/2006/628)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore and Thailand, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, Singapore and Thailand took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Martin, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Martin to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 11 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Cape Verde to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

the United Nations Mission in East Timor to the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste and its previously proposed successor office. This might be seen as a reversion to an earlier stage of United Nations engagement with Timor-Leste, but I want to stress that that is not the case. Timor-Leste is today a sovereign State that struggled hard for its right to self-determination and its independence. Its second constitutional Government, headed by Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta, represents a political compromise forged by Timorese to manage the most serious crisis faced by the new State and to steer the country towards its first post-independence parliamentary and presidential elections.

The international support provided to the young institutions of Timor-Leste has achieved a great deal. Increasingly, it is being provided not only through the successive missions but by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and by bilateral and multilateral donors. The proposals in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628) would not reverse that process. What they envisage is a more effectively coordinated partnership between Timor-Leste and the international community: a compact, which will be Timorese-led, to ensure that its Government's own programmes, funded by its growing budgetary resources, are complemented in the most helpful ways by international assistance and advice. The compact should ensure too that the international community, in providing that assistance and advice, does so in a context of coordination and complementarity, not one of confusion or competition among donors. Within the United Nations mission itself only a small group of civilian advisers would promote that coordination, principally in areas most crucial to the mission's key roles: the governance of the security sector, the administration of justice and the functioning of democratic institutions.

Assisting and ensuring the credibility of the 2007 elections will be a central task for the new mission's first year. But we are by now well aware that even the most successful elections are only one element of building a democratic State. We are aware too that the time-scale for developing institutional capacity, especially in areas such as policing and the justice system, is a long one.

The central failure revealed by the recent crisis has been in the security sector, and the reconstitution of the police service of Timor-Leste is the core task requested and proposed for the new mission, together with executive international policing in the interim. Regrettably, the task is a substantial one, because the diagnosis undertaken by our assessment mission made clear the weakness of the police throughout the country, and not only in Dili, where it is so keenly felt by internally displaced families today. But it is a task that must also be seen in a wider context. A fundamental review of the whole security sector is required to clarify the roles of the defence force and the police in relation to each other, together with strengthened Ministries of the Interior and Defence, to ensure sound institutional development and civilian oversight.

The challenge to the justice system as it confronts serious crimes, old and new, is greater than ever. The role of both official institutions and non-governmental organizations to protect human rights needs further strengthening. Our proposals would ensure that international assistance to those key related tasks is coordinated in one pillar of the new mission.

Timor-Leste's new Government, aided by the Church and civil society, is embarking upon the twin challenges of dialogue across political divisions and of community reconciliation, which must address societal tensions, in particular between those from the west and those from the east of the country. The new mission must be ready to support that process.

The demand for accountability for those responsible for crimes committed in the course of the crisis, as part of the necessary basis for reconciliation, is a strong one. The crucial work of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry will provide an objective starting point. Some have drawn a connection with the unfinished business of both justice and reconciliation for the serious crimes of 1999 and before. The proposals for the new mission incorporate a role in assisting with the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's separate report (S/2006/580) on justice and reconciliation.

The moments when Timor-Leste is in the international spotlight are rare and fleeting. But in each of its discussions of the response of the United Nations to the recent crisis, members of the Council have been united in their willingness to assist the country at a time of difficulty. Today I urge the Council to send a strong message to the people of Timor-Leste that the renewed determination of the international community to stand by them will indeed be a sustained

commitment, by supporting this and all other recommendations set out in the Secretary-General's report for a new mission — which correspond, I believe, to the appeal of Timor-Leste's Government and people.

The President: I thank Mr. Martin for his statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate a text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Council.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for his briefing. We also wish to congratulate His Excellency Mr. José Luis Guterres on his new appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, and we welcome him to the Council.

The United Republic of Tanzania witnessed the agony of the people of Timor-Leste following the events of the past three months. Those regrettable events have also focused international attention on the urgent needs of Timor-Leste. What has become clearer through the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628) and the briefing that we received this morning is that, even without those sad events, Timor-Leste's needs would be immense and challenging. The magnitude of the challenge is such that Timor-Leste cannot confront it alone.

It is true that the people of Timor-Leste need committed friends and partners, but they also need the United Nations. This Organization, and especially the Security Council, can be proud of the way they have assisted the people of Timor-Leste on their march to self-determination and independence. It was a worthwhile investment.

But if that invaluable investment is to make a lasting contribution to the growth and stability of Timor-Leste, the work aimed at supporting effective and credible security, administration and judicial institutions will have to be carried to its conclusion. We believe the United Nations has an important role in this regard.

It was therefore with great relief that we took note of the letter (S/2006/628, annex) from the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, His Excellency José Ramos-Horta, informing us that the emergency facing his country is at an end. His appeal that it is now important to focus attention on the establishment of a new United Nations peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste is, in our view, the most desirable way of providing Timor-Leste with the support of the international community and of preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Peacebuilding and the building of effective national institutions of governance and administration can be a daunting task. Nonetheless, it is one in which the United Nations has significant expertise, based on country-led and country-owned initiatives. In this regard, the future of Timor-Leste and its well-being very much depend on the support the international community can extend to it through the United Nations.

The assessment mission has established that this future will require the reconciliation of communities deeply divided by violence, the building of a multinational army and police force, the establishment of the rule of law, with a competent and impartial system of justice, the addressing of human rights abuses, and a focus on what could be the core of the problem: poverty.

Obviously, this is a daunting job — a complex responsibility that will require contributions of resources and expertise from the international community. However, the United Nations must play a central role in the support of Timor-Leste while urging individual Governments and regional and international organizations to do likewise. The Council can show the way. Moreover, the United Republic of Tanzania will support such a course of action.

Mr. Estremé (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, Ambassador José Luis Guterres. We congratulate him on the assumption of his new post, and we wish him all the best in his future tasks. I would like to assure Mr. Guterres that Argentina will continue to support Timor-Leste as it strives to achieve its fullest potential, as we have done since 1999.

I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Mr. Ian Martin, for his briefing, as well as for his efforts over recent months to resolve the crisis in that country.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628), introduced by Mr. Martin, offers a comprehensive and precise account of the situation in Timor-Leste and contains detailed proposals on a United Nations future presence there with which my country, in general, agrees. Argentina fully supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General and endorses the establishment of a multidimensional integrated United Nations mission in Timor-Leste for the period of one year, with the mandate, concept of operations and structure proposed in the report.

We welcome the fact that those recommendations adequately reflect the request made by the Dili Government, through Prime Minister Ramos-Horta in his letter of 4 August (S/2006/620, annex). The United Nations presence should fully respect the sovereignty of Timor-Leste and the specificities of that country. It is essential that the entire process be led by the Timorese people themselves.

The fact that we are considering the establishment of a new mission in Timor-Leste should not be interpreted to mean that earlier efforts failed. On the contrary, the achievements since 1999 were noteworthy. However, we have learned that peacebuilding and nation-building processes are long-term tasks. The international community has the responsibility not only to renew its commitment to Timor-Leste, but also to continue that commitment in the long term.

The forthcoming months will be of the greatest importance for the consolidation of the Timorese institutions. The general elections to be held in 2007 will be the principal milestone in that process. The support of the United Nations will be essential if success is to be ensured.

The justice sector and the police were two of the areas most affected during the recent crisis. For that reason, we believe that most of the international assistance efforts should focus on those areas.

We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's report on justice and reconciliation (S/2006/580), requested by the Council in September 2005. Argentina supports the inclusion in the mandate of the new United Nations mission concrete provisions regarding the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. We believe that the draft resolution to be considered by the Council in coming days should adequately reflect those aspects.

We support all the efforts being made by Timor-Leste and Indonesia to achieve reconciliation. The Commission of Truth and Friendship could be a valuable mechanism in this regard. However, we believe that both Governments should make every effort to further strengthen the credibility of the Commission, in particular by reviewing the amnesty clause, in order to ensure that that mechanism conforms with international human rights standards.

The events of April and May demonstrated that the security situation in Timor-Leste continues to be extremely fragile. We are pleased to note that the recommendations of the Secretary-General envisage the establishment of a mission comprising all the components necessary to face those complex security challenges.

The emphasis of the new mission should be placed on the deployment of a robust police component to support the maintenance of internal law and order and to contribute to the training of the Timorese national police. Given that elections are scheduled for 2007, the continued presence of that component will be of the utmost importance. For that reason, we should consider its deployment for at least one year.

I wish further to state that Argentina supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that the new mission include a small military capacity under United Nations command and control; we believe that the proposed numbers and mandate are appropriate.

In retrospect, we can say that the Security Council's decision to accelerate the withdrawal of the previous peacekeeping operation in Timor-Leste was premature. Drawing from these lessons, the Council should speedily respond to Timor-Leste's current needs and should act on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretary-General. That would send a clear message of support to the people and the Government of Timor-Leste.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I should like to begin by aligning myself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent

Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

In welcoming our former colleague José Luis Guterres, I should like to congratulate him on his elevation to the post of Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste. Like others, we are grateful to Ian Martin for leading the assessment mission to Timor-Leste, and to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2006/628).

We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal for a compact between Timor-Leste and the international community in order to reorient the existing national economic plan and coordinate the activities of the Government, the United Nations and other actors in building the capacity of State and Government institutions. A revised approach will be essential to address the political origin of the recent crisis. We therefore support the recommendation made by the assessment team for United Nations support during the elections, in order to reassure the population and the international community that the elections are free and fair. We can thus endorse the proposal for a mission to coordinate a comprehensive review of the security sector, assessing options for the development of both the defence force and the police service. That will be vital in achieving sustainable peace in Timor-Leste.

We agree that the reconstitution of the police service of Timor-Leste is the core task. We therefore support the proposal for a temporary blue-hatted executive police force within the mission. That police component should be of an appropriate size. Following the recent crisis, police forces outside of Dili have continued to function reasonably well, so there should be no need to return to the levels of international police that were seen in 2001. It is important that a clear timetable be established for handing back executive functions to the police service and for a drawdown following next year's elections.

As a bridging measure, we need the continued presence of an international stabilization force in the short term to provide support to the follow-on mission which we will be deploying, I hope, as a result of this discussion.

The Australians and others are making a valuable contribution on the ground. The national command structures allow them to respond flexibly to changes as they take place.

Putting in place the force generation mandate of a United Nations force would, in our view, inevitably be time-consuming and, in practice, unnecessary given the presence on the ground of the partners and the requirements for the interim. We welcome the coordinated efforts between partners on the ground involved in the international stabilization force and the United Nations mission. We favour its providing appropriate guarantees to the mission, but it should be left there.

It is not clear to me that a United Nations military liaison office needs to be included in the mission to assist the Border Patrol Unit in the planning and conduct of border security operations. Border tensions seem no longer to be a source of instability in Timor-Leste, as evidenced by the absence of incidents during the recent crisis. Given that the initial focus of the mission will be on policing and security-sector reform, it will be important that the mission have strong leadership with an appropriate background in that area.

The United Kingdom endorses the findings and the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on justice and reconciliation. The follow-on mission should assist the Timorese authorities to ensure accountability for human rights abuses and redress for victims. We support the Secretary-General's intention to establish a human rights and transitional justice unit that would ensure effective follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste and other transitional justice mechanisms, including the process relating to the Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR). The transition of all justice-sector actors currently working under the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) should go ahead, but I note of course that there are concerns regarding potential duplication with the United Nations Development Programme.

Since both gender and youth issues have the potential to lead to future instability, it is important that gender and youth aspects be incorporated into the work of a follow-on mission.

I would conclude by underlining the importance of a public information component in the new mission to avoid a repetition of the escalation of panic that occurred during the recent crisis, which was partly caused by rumour filling the void left by a lack of reliable information.

In support of Ian Martin's concluding remarks, let me say that we all need the Security Council to send a signal of continuing commitment to Timor-Leste, a signal that that commitment will be sustained until the job of the international community is done.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Ian Martin for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628); his briefing was illuminating for Council members in the context of this debate. We take this opportunity also to welcome Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, who is here representing his Government. His presence attests to the strength of the contacts between the United Nations and his country.

Despite all the caution engendered by the recent sad experience in Timor-Leste, my delegation wishes to note recent positive developments, seen in particular in the gradual return to peace and the swearing in of the new Government just a few days after the swearing in of Mr. José Ramos-Horta as Prime Minister. These positive developments are due to the sense of responsibility demonstrated by the authorities and the entire people of East Timor and to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, the entire staff of the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations — without whom this progress would not have been made.

We must also recall the decisive action by international forces deployed at the request of the Government of Timor-Leste and with the agreement of the international community, in particular those deployed by the Governments of Portugal, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia.

Thanks to the common effort of the international community, Timor-Leste has been put back on track. Today, the main challenge that the Government and the people of Timor-Leste must face together is that of consolidating what has been achieved, sending strong signals in order to prevent a repetition of past errors. My delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General to set up a new multidimensional, integrated United Nations peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste. Indeed, the structure and mandate of the mission as proposed by the Secretary-General are consistent with the wishes of the expressed by the Government in its recent correspondence with the President of the Security Council. That is true also of the objectives of most of the proposals contained in the report of the Japanese Government mission, which was recently introduced by the representative of Japan and of which my delegation takes note.

My delegation also expresses its support for the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on justice and reconciliation in Timor-Leste (S/2006/580) and for any other approach taken to provide the new United Nations mission with the resources it needs to accomplish its tasks in order to ensure a swift and methodical transfer of full responsibility for the conduct of national affairs to the Government and the people of Timor-Leste.

It is clear that the success of the mission to be established will depend not only on the resolve of the people who will lead it, but also on an assessment of past actions and the hoped-for results. In other words, while it is understood that the United Nations must help this new member of the international community take its first steps, not direct it, the United Nations — and thus the Security Council — still has the responsibility to avoid any obstacles that could arise in its path.

Therefore, with regard, for example, to the judicial proceedings against the perpetrators of crimes in Timor-Leste who are currently living in Indonesia, we should have discussions with the country's authorities to identify the best ways to combat impunity while respecting both international norms in that area and the sovereignty of every country.

As for the security problems in Timor-Leste, which we know are a sensitive issue, my delegation earnestly hopes that consideration will be given to the proposal to gradually replace the international forces now on the ground with a strong presence of United Nations police supported by a military unit under United Nations command — which in turn will be replaced eventually by the Timorese national police and army.

We must not only take account of the experience acquired on the ground by the international forces, as has been said, but also better meet the expectations expressed by the Government of Timor-Leste by seeking consensus on the best way to ensure security in the run-up to the critical period of next year's elections — a way that is in the interests of the

Timorese people and that is agreed by all the parties concerned.

In conclusion, we believe it is important to stress that, in the context of the new United Nations mission, the importance of the security aspect should not obscure the need to combat the deep-seated causes of the crisis — particularly unemployment and poverty, which affect a significant portion of the population, especially young people and women. Timor-Leste also needs schools and hospitals — in short, social infrastructure. My delegation therefore supports any proposal to establish an international assistance programme, including through the initiative of a "compact" for Timor-Leste.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2006/628) and Special Envoy Ian Martin for his briefing. We would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, who is here among us once again at this meeting. We wish to pay a special tribute to Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, who was unable to attend this meeting, and to the entire staff of the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) for continuing their work under extremely difficult conditions. We also express our appreciation and thanks to the military police from Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal for helping to maintain order in Timor-Leste.

It was with the assistance of the United Nations that Timor-Leste achieved independence and began the process of nation-building. People often refer to Timor-Leste as the child of the United Nations. The United Nations thus bears special responsibilities and obligations with regard to Timor-Leste.

Over the past few months, the Security Council has been closely following the developments in Timor-Leste and has often held discussions and consultations about the situation, from which the Council has sought to draw lessons. The Council has also been working out appropriate decisions as to what actions should now be taken in Timor-Leste by the United Nations and the rest of the international community to help the country maintain stability and promote development so as to consolidate as much as possible the progress it has made since independence and nationhood and to prevent further reversals in the momentum of peacebuilding.

In that context, the Chinese delegation believes that the Government, national leaders and other social and political forces in Timor-Leste should put their national interests first and engage in good-faith dialogue within the constitutional framework, seeking common ground and setting aside differences in order to create favourable conditions for next year's presidential and parliamentary elections. Here, the United Nations and the international community must play an active and constructive mediating role.

Secondly, the United Nations and the international community must work out an effective long-term assistance plan for Timor-Leste. It must be said that for some time, while the success story of Timor-Leste was being enthusiastically told and retold, people easily overlooked the fact that the country had existed for only four years. In effect, it was starting from scratch in terms of human resources and institutional capacity-building and could not possibly stand on its own overnight. Therefore, China is in favour of sending a new multidimensional integrated mission to Timor-Leste and helping to establish a "compact" between Timor-Leste and the international community.

Thirdly, with regard to the new mission's composition and mandate, we must configure the mission so that it will be able to address the root causes of the crisis. The views of the Government of Timor-Leste must also be fully respected and taken into account. In the short term, in order to improve and maintain security, it is imperative that we urgently address the potential danger of widespread weapons, help to reorganize the military and police sectors and rationalize their relationship, supporting the new mission by providing it with robust police functions and a small military component.

Fourthly, the international community should continue to encourage and support Timor-Leste in developing long-term friendly relations with its neighbours. It is gratifying to note that two of its large neighbours have played a positive role in calming the unrest in Timor-Leste. We hope that the Truth and Friendship Commission will continue to work actively to achieve results at an early date and appropriately resolve the outstanding issues.

As an Asian country, we are very concerned about the stability and development of Timor-Leste, but also about how the situation in the country might affect the South-East Asian region as a whole. During the turmoil, the Chinese medical team continued to carry out its duties and remained at its post. Our two Governments recently signed an agreement to send a second medical team to Timor-Leste. In the future, we will continue to provide assistance within our capacity and to play our part in helping to achieve stability and development in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): I would like to thank the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ian Martin, for his briefing. I would also like to welcome José Luis Guterres to the Security Council and to congratulate him on his assumption of the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste.

Denmark fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by Finland on behalf of the European Union. I would only, at this stage, like to add a few points.

The security situation in Timor-Leste has stabilized, thanks in large part to the troops provided by Australia, Portugal, Malaysia and New Zealand, and thanks to the recent reconciliation efforts and political progress. Nevertheless, Timor-Leste's security and political situation remains fragile and some of the key institutions, including the Timorese police, are no longer functioning. Significant international assistance is therefore required to bring the peacebuilding effort in Timor-Leste back on track, and we support the Secretary-General's idea of a Timor-Leste compact.

It is clear that the future mission in Timor-Leste will need to be sufficiently large to effectively address such urgent issues as the need for a United Nations police force, training of the national police and support to ensure that next year's elections will be free and fair. There is also an urgent need for institutional support, particularly in the justice sector, the rapid implementation of quick-impact projects and sustainable economic development, in large part through assistance from traditional development agencies and bilateral donors. Despite the increase in the international presence, it is, at the same time, important that the Timorese remain in the driver's seat and that any advice and assistance be provided on a sustainable basis.

We strongly support the Secretary-General's recommendations on the issues of human rights and justice and reconciliation, including the proposal for the mandate of the new mission to include assistance for the resumption of the investigative functions of the former Serious Crimes Unit. However, we believe that the international support and legitimacy provided to the bilateral Commission of Truth and Friendship should be conditioned on a revision of its amnesty clause. As mentioned by the Secretary-General, that clause is currently inconsistent with the requirements of international law, which bars amnesty for serious violations of international law. The new mission should support efforts that ensure that justice will prevail for past and future crimes, including those that took place earlier this year and led to the recent crisis.

Many challenges remain, including to address the root causes behind the recent violence. It is our hope that the future United Nations mission will allow Timor-Leste to establish sustainable institutions as well as sustainable peace and development.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): Like others, I wish to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ian Martin, for his briefing. I welcome the presence in this Chamber of our former colleague, Ambassador Guterres, and wish him well in the discharge of his new important duties as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

I wish to reiterate our appreciation to the four Governments — Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal — for the contribution they are making with their security forces to the stabilization of Timor-Leste, as well as to the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) in Dili, led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hasegawa, for its contributions.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General with his recommendations on the shape and mission mandate for a post-UNOTIL United Nations presence in Timor-Leste in the aftermath of the recent turmoil in the country. We also commend the assessment task carried out by Mr. Martin of the political, security, social and economic situation in the country, which formed the basis for the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report.

The report of the Secretary-General concludes that the recent series of violent incidents were triggered by political conflict in the Government,

which expanded and came to involve the security organs of the country and caused extensive displacement of innocent civilians. Significantly, the report noted that, while there have been some gains in certain areas, including the promotion of democratic institutions and governance since the independence of the country four years ago, the Government and society still face enormous challenges, such as, among other things, institution-building in the security sector and in the judicial field, establishment of the rule of law, fighting poverty, and dealing with the high degree of youth unemployment, which contributed to the crisis and aggravated it once it began.

The Japanese Government, for its part, sent a mission to Timor-Leste following the turmoil and issued a report whose conclusions match in large measure the assessment and conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's report.

We believe that, in considering the appropriate shape, size and mandate of a successor mission to UNOTIL, it is important to fully take into account those conclusions and the assessment of the Secretary-General. In that context, we wish to emphasize a few points as particularly important.

First, we consider that the basic assumptions of and the policy line followed by the Security Council in Timor-Leste for the past few years have proved in the main to be a correct approach. That policy is aimed at promoting, as much as possible, the independence, self-reliance and ownership of the Government and its people as much as possible; fostering the gradual transition from a peacekeeping to a peacebuilding mission, while taking local conditions fully into account; and encouraging broad-based partnership with various actors for sustainable development. We do not believe that the recent turmoil occurred because of the United Nations policy, which, in our view, helped the people of Timor-Leste to make important gains within a relatively short period of time, starting almost from scratch.

However, that is not to say that what the United Nations has done in all its areas of involvement has been perfect. There were obvious shortcomings, and it is important to recognize them and learn lessons from the experience. For example, we believe that we could have prevented the recent outbreak of violence, or at least minimized its consequences, if we had been able to discern and promptly address the fragility of the political and security system of Timor-Leste.

Secondly, the Secretary-General's report underlines the importance of not trying to reverse, because of the recent internal disturbances, the transfer of responsibilities that has already taken place. The responsibilities have been gradually handed over to the Government of Timor-Leste, to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other development partners, as appropriate. That transition, the Secretary-General reports suggests, should continue to be encouraged. We fully endorse that notion, which we believe should inform, as an important guiding principle, the consideration of the follow-on United Nations mission.

Thirdly, Japan fully supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to develop the idea of a compact and to promote the conclusion of such a compact between Timor-Leste and international development partners upon the initiative of Timor-Leste.

We also believe that, in order to ensure the effective operation of a follow-on mission in Timor-Leste, and even to ensure optimal coordination and cooperation among key participants within the framework of such a compact, an appropriate mechanism, such as a policy consulting council, would need to be considered. The Japanese Government mission's report mentioned previously has made such a recommendation as a useful facilitation tool for effective coordination and cooperation among actors, which should include the United Nations, the Government of Timor-Leste and other international partners. We would like to encourage the United Nations to consult with the Government of Timor-Leste on such an idea at an appropriate time.

UNOTIL's mandate will expire on 20 August, and the Council will need to agree on a draft resolution on a follow-on mission. The Core Group countries on Timor-Leste have been discussing elements of the draft resolution, drawing on the Secretary-General's report.

Japan, as the lead country on that issue in the Council, will continue to facilitate those discussions in the Core Group and to conduct consultations as well with the members of the Council, in order to proceed with the preparation of a draft resolution. Our aim is to work on the draft resolution with a view to its adoption by consensus by the end of this week.

Currently, there appears to be a broad agreement of views on establishing a multidimensional mission, largely based on the Secretary-General's recommendations, including the police and civilian adviser components of the new mission. There is still some significant divergence of opinion on how to handle its military component. Some argue that it should remain under a bilateral arrangement, while others contend that it should be brought under the United Nations Blue Helmets.

Japan's view is that, for the sake of ensuring operational effectiveness, it would be preferable to utilize, to the fullest extent possible, the international security forces that have been provided on a bilateral arrangement. Nevertheless, we will continue to facilitate discussions on the issue, aimed at arriving at an option that is agreeable to all the partners.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): France aligns itself with the statement that will be made by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

France would like to express its appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General and to thank Mr. Ian Martin, his Special Envoy, for the excellent work he has carried out on behalf of the United Nations.

Timor-Leste experienced violent security disturbances immediately following the withdrawal of the United Nations presence from its territory. Those disturbances led to the complete disintegration of the police force in Dili. Mr. Ian Martin has also informed us that the Timorese police has also been much weakened in the provinces and that Timorese society is more divided now than it was following independence.

That bitter assessment leads us to the conclusion that there is a need for a long-term recommitment by the United Nations in Timor-Leste. In that respect, France supports the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report, which we believe to be consistent with what is needed in terms of the mandate and the composition of the mission, as well as with the requests that have been made by the Timorese Prime Minister, Mr. Ramos-Horta, in his letter dated 4 August.

We are, of course, now prepared to draft and adopt a resolution. As the Ambassador of Japan pointed out, there are still some outstanding questions with regard to the form that an international military presence should take in Timor-Leste. I would like from the outset to express our gratitude for the action led by Portugal, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia on the ground.

We will adapt our proposal essentially in the light of the expectations of the Government of Timor-Leste itself. In that regard, I would like to say that we will not establish our final position until we have heard the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Luis Guterres, whose presence we welcome here.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first of all to thank Mr. Ian Martin, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Timor-Leste, for his praiseworthy efforts. We would also like to thank him for the important briefing he gave us this morning.

I would also like to welcome my friend, Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, who is here with us in the Council. I congratulate him on his appointment to his post and wish him every success.

Certainly, the circumstances facing Timor-Leste are extremely sensitive. The recent chaos in that country reflects the delicate nature of that explosive situation, given the worsened economic situation and the precariousness of resources, as well as the country's recently gained independence.

The deteriorating security situation and the generalized chaos demonstrate once again that Timor-Leste sorely needs the assistance of the international community. The crisis in that country is complicated; it involves political, historical, social, economic and institutional issues. The weakness of the political and Government institutions and the great disparity in the performance of several of those institutions led to an unleashing of the crisis. Moreover, the wounds of the past have not yet been healed, while unemployment among young people is rampant. All of this has led to a weakened security situation and chaos.

The international response to the security crisis in Timor-Leste was positive and swift. We therefore extend our thanks to all those who sent forces to help stabilize the country at the request of the Timorese Government. The international community worked swiftly to respond to the need to stabilize the situation, provide economic assistance to Timor-Leste, increase

investment and create increased opportunities for youth employment.

We must continue to focus heavily on reform of the administrative, political and economic institutions and to give the country a healthy and solid new momentum. We therefore reaffirm the important role to be played by the United Nations in the important task of creating of a new mission to work side by side with the Timorese Government, provide advice and expertise in rebuilding Government institutions and establish long-term plans for building a modern State.

In that respect, my delegation supports the recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the creation of a mission for a preliminary period of 12 months, until the results of the 2007 elections are known. Reports will be submitted periodically to the Security Council during that time to keep it abreast of the need for reducing or expanding the mission.

The international community has learned an important lesson in Timor-Leste with regard to newly independent countries. We must not abandon them in precarious or weakened political and economic situations. We hope that this experience will help us to get down to the serious work of helping Timor-Leste to overcome the crisis.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the presence in the Chamber of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Luis Guterres. We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ian Martin, for his report on the United Nations future role in Timor-Leste.

We believe that the main conclusions and recommendations contained in the report are correct. We welcome the formation of a new Timorese Government headed by Mr. José Ramos-Horta and we take note of the measures adopted by the new leadership, aimed at stabilizing the situation in the country and enhancing dialogue with Timorese political movements and society. Thanks to those efforts, the situation has recently improved considerably. We note the important stabilizing role played by the international force made up of contingents from Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and Malaysia. We are grateful to the Governments of those countries for their rapid response to the request for assistance made by the Timorese authorities.

At the same time, it is clear that the situation in Timor-Leste remains fragile and that many problems facing the country are still far from being resolved. Of particular concern for the near future are the situation with regard to the disarming of former participants in the recent crisis and the still unresolved problem of the tens of thousands of internally displaced persons.

The recent crisis clearly showed the extent and complexity of the problems in Timor-Leste. Given its own continuing inadequate capacities, Timor-Leste requires long-term substantial external support. We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to establish, for an initial period of 12 months, an integrated United Nations mission in Timor-Leste. It is important that the planned mission should include a strong police component to deal with the important task of supporting law and order in Timor-Leste and helping with the creation and strengthening of the national police force which has practically disintegrated.

We agree that the civil-sector priorities of the future mission should be support for national reconciliation, support for the upcoming election process, assistance in the design and implementation of national socio-economic strategies and support in creating a justice system and other State structures.

Given the diminished capacity of the Timorese armed forces and the clear request from the Timor-Leste authorities, we support the recommendation of the Secretary-General to include a small military capacity in the future mission.

With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on justice and reconciliation for Timor-Leste (S/2006/580), we believe that the approach proposed in the report is the correct one, given the position of the interested States and the fact that the approach is aimed at strengthening Timor-Leste's capacity in the justice sector. We believe that the proposal of the Secretary-General with regard to the force's format and international composition is acceptable.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): Let me start, Mr. President, by thanking you for organizing a very pertinent meeting on Timor-Leste following the critical situation the country experienced recently and with a view to a Security Council decision on a follow-up United Nations presence there. It is a particular pleasure for me to welcome amongst us Foreign Minister José Luis Gutteres. I would also like to thank

Mr. Lin Martin, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his insightful briefing.

Greece fully aligns itself with the statement to be made later by Finland on behalf of the European Union. I would like, though, to make a few additional comments.

We are pleased to note that the security situation has calmed down after the unfortunate violent incidents of recent months. Greece once more commends the immediate dispatch and deployment of defence and police forces by Portugal, Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia in response to the relevant request by the President and the Government of Timor-Leste.

At this juncture, we must not relax our vigilance. The recent crisis demonstrated how fragile the stability of that newly independent country is. In many ways, the crisis itself further weakened State institutions, such as the police. Clearly, the root causes underlying the recent crisis — namely, youth unemployment and unhealed wounds of the past — may yet reappear, so a robust international security presence is needed.

Having played a crucial role in the creation of Timor-Leste, the Security Council has, in our view, a moral obligation to sustain the viability of the country until such time as it can provide for its own security and development.

As requested by Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, the new mission to succeed the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) should have a police force of considerable strength, backed by a small military force, under the command and control of the United Nations. That request is taken on board by the Secretary-General in his latest report (S/2006/628).

We cannot fail to agree. Bilateral arrangements to reinforce the internal security situation, though welcome in the short term, cannot be a viable long-term solution. The United Nations is in a unique position to help stabilize security in Timor-Leste, while at the same time providing aid for its economic development. There are already many United Nations agencies on the ground helping national authorities in various humanitarian and development aid programmes. What needs to be upgraded is the level and quality of security provided to them, in order for them to function in a stable environment. That can be done only by a new United Nations mission that has police and military components, as already suggested. In any case, we are talking about a relatively small force — nothing of the proportions of those that have been dispatched to other parts of the world.

Such an arrangement would be in line with the respect we have expressed for Timorese ownership, would encourage the new Government of Prime Minister Ramos-Horta in its endeavours and would provide the necessary security umbrella for other United Nations and humanitarian actors in the field. It would thus underline the determination of the United Nations not to let a nation with teething problems go it alone.

The presence of an upgraded, multidisciplinary, integrated new United Nations mission will also provide the necessary help for the reform of the police and the justice sector and would also serve to promote national political dialogue and reconciliation. It would also boost the sense of confidence of the Timorese people in view of the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held next year.

In closing, allow me to recall that we have to learn from past experience. If we rushed to close down the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) — as is the prevailing sense right now — we have to be very careful and not hurry this time. Greece looks forward to working with the other members of the Council towards achieving consensus in formulating the most appropriate solution concerning the United Nations mission that will succeed UNOTIL.

Ms. Wolcott Sanders (United States of America): We thank Mr. Martin for his presentation and would like to express our appreciation for his efforts to bring about reconciliation in Timor-Leste. We also welcome Foreign Minister Gutteres to today's proceedings.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General take a comprehensive and detailed approach addressing the root causes of the crisis in Timor-Leste. The United States particularly appreciates the recommendation that United Nations advisors work closely with the Timorese Ministries of Defence and Interior to ensure that there is an integrated approach to the armed forces and police. That will be critical in building a democratic security sector.

We remain unpersuaded that there is a need for United Nations troops. Security concerns in Timor-

Leste are internal. The international force is in place, is well equipped and well staffed, and is prepared to respond if there should be any need for military action.

The United States supports a strong United Nations police operation in Timor-Leste, engaged both in law enforcement and in training. That is a critical issue, both for security and to build a police force which respects the rule of law and is responsible to the elected Government. We note that credible policing is only one element in restoring tranquillity and creating an atmosphere in which people feel safe to return home. The social and political issues which underlie the violence must also be addressed.

We fully agree that there must be accountability for the crimes committed in Timor-Leste during the violence last spring. The United States appreciates the work being done by the Special Commission of Inquiry. We hope that the Special Commission will address both individual and institutional accountability, as well as factors contributing to the violence, including allegations of illegal arms distribution by former and current officials.

We strongly support reactivation of the Serious Crimes Unit to complete investigation of the atrocities of 1999. The United Nations and the international community should also consider what assistance they might give to the judicial systems of Timor-Leste and Indonesia to bring to trial those arrested since the Special Panels for serious crimes were closed, or who may be brought to trial in the future.

The judicial and legal sectors in Timor-Leste need our support, and we urge Timor's partners to respond to that need. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that reconciliation be a key element in responding to such crimes. Timor-Leste's own institutions should be the primary planners and implementers of reconciliation efforts, with the United Nations facilitating and lending its good offices.

The critical work of the expert advisers placed in key ministries and offices of the Government must continue so that Timor-Leste's friends and partners can help the Government to develop the expertise it requires.

Finally, the work of the electoral unit will be a vital element in assisting the Government and people of Timor-Leste to hold free, fair and transparent elections in 2007. The Electoral Assistance Division should lead that effort.

Ms. Tincopa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Ian Martin, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his briefing. We also welcome the presence in the Chamber of Minister for Foreign Affairs Jose Luis Guterres.

Moreover, we wish to express our thanks for the reports of the Secretary-General.

Peru firmly supports the Government and people of Timor-Leste in their quest to ensure a State that will be peaceful and sustainable in the long term. In that regard, we would highlight the measures adopted in the past month to halt the violence and insecurity experienced by that country in May and June 2006. We welcome the appointments of Mr. José Ramos-Horta as Prime Minister and of other members of the cabinet on 10 July, creating an atmosphere of tranquillity and hope following a series of unfortunate events. We believe it essential for the Government and the various political forces to work on the basis of dialogue and reconciliation and with the support of the international community and, of course, of the United Nations in implementing defined objectives to ensure stability, development and security in Timor-Leste.

The Secretary-General's report pursuant to resolution 1690 (2006) provides a complete and objective assessment of the situation in Timor-Leste, along with specific recommendations for the establishment of an integrated and multidimensional United Nations mission. Peru supports many of those recommendations, among which I would highlight the following.

We support the Secretary-General's proposal to deploy a maximum of 1,608 United Nations police personnel to Timor-Leste in the period leading up to, during and after the 2007 elections, and gradually to draw it down following the elections.

We support a small military component under the control and command of the United Nations with a maximum of 350 armed and unarmed troops of all ranks, to be concentrated in Dili, with the exception of unarmed liaison officer teams in the border districts, as described in paragraph 118 of the Secretary-General's report.

We support the inclusion of the civilian component and its various mechanisms, including units

for political affairs, elections, human rights and transitional justice, democratic governance, humanitarian affairs and gender, to mention but a few. We also support the joint operations and joint mission analysis centres.

In brief, we would stress that Peru supports the strong and robust mandate for the new United Nations mission in Timor-Leste described in paragraph 110 of the Secretary-General's report. We would wish the elements and activities described therein to be included in the draft resolution to be adopted by the Council in the coming days.

With regard to the civilian component, we would like to focus on the gender unit. Its relationship to resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security is essential in a country like Timor-Leste, where women need an opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the promotion, maintenance and building of peace and where they need to be empowered in order to participate in the political decision-making and development of their country.

We also believe it important to have a human rights and transitional justice unit to monitor the human rights situation and assist the Timorese authorities in ensuring that those who are responsible for violating human rights are punished and that victims will enjoy individual and collective redress.

Along the same lines, we would refer to the Secretary-General's report on justice and reconciliation in Timor-Leste, in which emphasis is placed on recognizing the efforts undertaken by Indonesia and Timor-Leste in the area of truth and friendship. We believe, however, that it is important for both Governments to continue to strengthen the capacities of their respective judicial systems, in particular with respect to bringing to justice those responsible for serious violations of human rights committed in Timor-Leste in 1999.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore the importance of continuing to promote economic development in Timor-Leste and for income to reach those most in need. To a great extent, the long-term success of Timor-Leste will depend on the success of economic and social development. In that regard, I would point to the reference in the Secretary-General's report to a "compact" between Timor-Leste and the international community to reorient the existing national development plan in order to make it more effective and productive. If that challenge is to be met, it is essential for the Government and the national social actors of Timor-Leste to work together and responsibly in drafting policies and programmes to that end.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): Let me thank you, Sir, for calling this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to speak on this vital issue at a very critical juncture. We welcome the presence here of Mr. Guterres, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, to participate in this debate, and we thank Mr. Martin for his statement.

Since the representative of Finland will make a statement on behalf of the European Union with which we associate ourselves, we will confine ourselves to making some supplementary remarks.

We share the concern of others over the incidents that have occurred in the past three months in Timor-Leste, and note with concern that the population is still suffering the consequences of violence and destruction that arose from them. We agree that the security situation in Timor-Leste has changed visibly, thanks to the presence of the international police and military forces from Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal. It is necessary to emphasize that many of the elements that gave rise to the original crisis are merely dormant, while the crisis itself has created new potential sources of instability that add to the complexity of the situation, including the large number of missing firearms. The Secretary-General has duly noted that fact in his latest report.

A new Government was sworn in a month ago. In the short term, it will have to deal with the instability and disgruntlement of various groups in society in the aftermath of a traumatic crisis. In the long-term, it will be confronted with the complex challenge of building a new nation.

The United Nations has achieved a great deal in Timor-Leste, but significant challenges remain in realizing long-term security and sustainable development. The emerging institutions in that country are still fragile. With the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections next year, Timor-Leste is rapidly approaching yet another crucial crossroads in its history. The elections will be of the utmost importance, although we agree with Mr. Martin that they are only one of the elements in building a successful democratic society. The elections will be important for the future

stability and democratic development of Timor-Leste and must be conducted in a fair and free procedure. In that respect, we fully recognize the need for the continued involvement of the international community to help Timor-Leste to restore order and build a democracy.

A new international presence in Timor-Leste is needed to meet the changed circumstances. We support the establishment of a new, robust and complex United Nations mission in Timor-Leste. Its role would be to consolidate the gains that the United Nations has already achieved in the country, help the Timorese Government ensure political stability, support the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections and maintain public security. It would also help Timor-Leste to rebuild its whole security sector and its economy, fight poverty and promote and protect human rights. At the same time, it is important to note that the Timorese Government and the Timorese people must assume full ownership and responsibility for the transformation process, with the continued support of the international community.

As a final note, we also wish to underline that an important element of peacebuilding and peace consolidation in Timor-Leste includes fostering national reconciliation. Prime Minister Ramos-Horta and President Gusmão have both committed themselves to that goal, without sacrificing accountability for crimes committed during recent months. We note with satisfaction that the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste has completed the first of two visits aimed at establishing the facts and circumstances surrounding the incidents of April and May, including their causes. We would also like to highlight the need for continued attention to the necessity for accountability for past human rights crimes in Timor-Leste.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

At the outset, let me welcome to the Council my friend and former colleague Ambassador José Luis Guterres, as well as to wish him well in his new assignment as the Foreign Minister of his country. Let me also reiterate our appreciation for the invaluable contributions of Special Representative Sukehiro Hasegawa and Special Envoy Ian Martin with regard to putting Timor-Leste back on track after the unfortunate disturbances of April 2006. They have not only highlighted the challenges facing the country, but have also provided very useful insights and suggestions concerning the way forward.

Among the priority areas deserving close attention are the consolidation of democratic institutions, electoral support, national reconciliation, law and order, the promotion and protection of human rights, humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, poverty alleviation and the provision of basic services. Meeting those challenges effectively will require a combination of local initiative and international support, with the United Nations in the vanguard. More important, they also serve to remind us forcefully that six years are not enough to transform this newly independent country into a stable and prosperous democracy. As stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2006/628), nation-building and peacebuilding are long-term tasks. Therefore, in trying to prune down the partnership between the international community and Timor-Leste, with the aim of making it more focused, we must also be careful to strike the right balance, taking into account the vital lessons we have learned from the disturbances that broke out in Dili on 28 April 2006.

At the same time, we recognize that the support of the international community cannot be a substitute for the determination and commitment of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste to build a united, democratic and prosperous nation of their own. Therefore, we urge that maximum effort be exerted to develop local capacity as quickly as possible.

On the future role of the United Nations, we recognize that it is clearly well-placed to define and manage the role of the international community during Timor-Leste's transition into a more stable and capable State. We support the call for a robust United Nations police, military and civilian mission that would guarantee law and order pending the reorganization and restructuring of the Timorese police and armed forces in order to raise their level of professionalism.

Obviously, no meaningful development can take place in a climate of lawlessness and impunity. On the other hand, there can be no lasting security where the basic needs of the people are not met. In Timor-Leste, as in other countries in similar circumstances, the link between poverty and insecurity cannot be denied. Nor is it easy to reconcile a society in which people find themselves scrambling for the little that is available. Inevitably, poverty tends to breed a privileged

minority, and to reinforce a sense of discrimination among the most deprived. Consequently, in addition to security-sector reform and institutional capacity-building, the highest priority must be accorded to the delivery of basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation, as well as the creation of meaningful livelihood opportunities, especially for young people.

In the short term, however, the humanitarian consequences of the recent disturbances must be urgently addressed, in order to prevent internally displaced persons from aggravating the discontent in society. Every able-bodied person must be actively and productively involved in the nation's development.

Not only have recent events exposed the inadequacies of the governance structures of Timor-Leste; more important, they underscore the urgency of alleviating youth unemployment and its attendant poverty and deprivation. Consequently, the idea of a Timorese-led "compact" based on the national development plan should define the depth of engagement between the international community and Timor-Leste. Hopefully, next year's elections will serve as an opportunity for the people of Timor-Leste to begin afresh with renewed determination to forge ahead.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste): It is a great honour to see you, my dear friend Ambassador Nana Effah-Apenteng, presiding over the Security Council for this month. I wish you and your country, Ghana, every success during these very challenging times.

Today I would like to share with the Council my Government's views on the role of the future United Nations presence and of international assistance in Timor-Leste beyond the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), on 20 August 2006. Let me start by reiterating, on behalf of the Timorese people, our gratitude to the troop-contributing countries — Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal — for having so promptly and efficiently re-established and maintained law and order and saved many Timorese lives. That intervention was made at the request of the President of the Republic, Mr. Xanana Gusmão, the President of the national Parliament, Mr. Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres; and the Prime Minister of the first constitutional Government, Mr. Mari Alkatiri.

We welcome the report of Secretary-General Kofi Annan (S/2006/628) and we commend the great contribution of Special Envoy Ian Martin and his team on the assessment mission. The report was the product of wide consultation in Timor-Leste. In that respect, we concur with its recommendations, which are in line with the spirit of the letters of President Xanana Gusmão and other key leaders calling for the establishment of a robust United Nations police, military and civilian mission to assist the people of Timor-Leste. That was followed by a letter (S/2006/620, annex) by Prime Minister Ramos-Horta dated 4 August 2006, to you, Mr. President, and to the Secretary-General calling for the establishment of a multidimensional and integrated peacekeeping mission, with a police force of considerable strength and a small military force under the command and control of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's report provides a good account and a sound analysis of the events that took place in April and May of this year. For the sake of brevity, I shall not elaborate any further in that regard. Those events revealed the institutional failures of the security forces and the fragility of democratic institutions. It also revealed an acute need for continued long-term international assistance in the building of viable State institutions, notably in the areas of security, justice and development.

Cognizant of the fact that institutional failures in the Timorese national police (PNTL) and the Timorese armed forces (F-FDTL) are at the core of the recent crisis in Timor-Leste, a holistic approach to security-sector reform will be required. International advisory support is important in reviewing the future role and needs of the defence sector, including both the F-FDTL and the Ministry of Defence.

In the area of justice, the funds made available under the Justice System Programme of the United Nations Development Programme are not sufficient to cover the support needed for the Office of the Prosecutor-General, particularly in the light of the recent violent incidents and the expected increase in the number of cases that the national judicial system

will have to handle. Also, a significant number of human rights officers are needed to support our national institutions, including the Office of the Provedor and the national Parliament, as well as civil society, in monitoring, promoting and protecting human rights and promoting justice and reconciliation. It is of vital importance that the international community remain engaged in fostering the genuine commitment to justice and human rights that exists in the Government, in civil society and among the Timorese people.

At the same time, I wish to assure the members of the Security Council that the Government will expeditiously search for a solution to the grievances of the 594 petitioners by means of the recently invigorated national Commission of Investigation.

I wish to express my Government's greatest appreciation for the work of the international Independent Special Commission of Inquiry, which is currently undertaking an investigation into the events of 28 and 29 April, 23 to 25 May and related events that contributed to the crisis. The establishment of the facts and circumstances relevant to those events will be critical if Timor-Leste is to achieve reconciliation and uphold the rule of law. The Commission will submit its findings and recommendations by 7 October. The Government considers the domestic justice system to be the primary avenue of accountability for any criminal acts and human rights violations identified by the Commission. We therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General on justice and reconciliation (S/2006/580). The Government is considering the recommendations contained therein, and will take appropriate measures.

We believe that a strong international police presence will be vital if executive policing functions are to be performed in Dili and throughout Timor-Leste while the PNTL is being reconstituted. United Nations police officers will be equally important in assisting and further enhancing the capacity of our national police in the maintenance of law and respect for human rights throughout the districts and subdistricts. While the national police have been trained by United Nations police and bilateral partners and have the basic know-how to carry out routine policing, the most recent events demonstrated the inability of the PNTL to adequately deal with developments that are of a political nature. The impartiality of the PNTL in a tense political environment will be tested again when it deals with the first nationwide elections. The presence of United Nations police will be vital in providing advice and in supporting the national police in planning and carrying out their electoral-related security responsibilities, including through training and assistance in the development and implementation of a comprehensive election security plan aimed at forestalling volatility and possible violence throughout the electoral period.

The Government is moving to prepare for the upcoming elections. The draft electoral laws on presidential and parliamentary elections, which were submitted to the national Parliament for a broad public debate, are expected to be approved, after the Parliament's annual recess, in mid-September. The President and the Government have agreed to hold both the parliamentary and presidential elections before May 2007.

The Government of Timor-Leste is committed to a free, fair and credible electoral process. Having consulted internally and having taken due consideration of concerns raised by civil society, the Church and other stakeholders, we have called upon the international community to assist us in that endeavour, including through the provision of technical and logistical support. We intend to continue discussions with the United Nations regarding the most appropriate type of assistance.

Timor-Leste is one of the poorest countries in the world. While the primary underlying causes of the current crisis are political and institutional, poverty and the related high urban unemployment and the absence of any prospects of employment opportunities, especially for young people, also contributed to the crisis. In order to ensure coordinated support for the economic development of our country, the new mission should work closely with the Government and its partners and provide assistance in the design of poverty-reduction and economic growth policies and strategies so as to promote the goals of our national development plan and work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The 2006-2007 budget was adopted yesterday by the national Parliament; it represents an increase of 122 per cent compared with the previous fiscal year. As Prime Minister Ramos-Horta has said, the budget is pro-poor and pro-job-creation. We hope and pray that the combination of better economic and social policies

and continuing international support in all areas will help us to overcome today's crises.

We acknowledge that there are differences of opinion among Member States, but I am hopeful that the Council will take into account the seriousness of the situation confronting our people and our country today. While there are no more gunshots, many guns remain in civilian hands, and the underlying causes of the conflict have yet to be fully addressed. It will take time for us to reconstitute the defence and police forces. It will take many more years for those institutions to regain the confidence and trust of our people. We therefore believe that the recommendations of the Secretary-General, including the recommendations relating to the presence of a very small military force under the command and control of the United Nations, are important. That is the best option that we have in facing the current crisis in East Timor.

As a colleague who has for many years shared with Council members the corridors and meeting rooms of this House, I appeal to the Council to work with us in ensuring that Timor-Leste does not relapse into conflict again.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to UNOTIL and all of its staff, and, in particular, to Special Representative Hasegawa, for the excellent cooperation and support given to the Government and people during the crisis that we recently faced. We would also like to thank the international community for its support, and the embassies in East Timor for their cooperation and support during the crisis. We will work with determination with all of you to guarantee that our people have a great future — a future in peace, stability and development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The following countries align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

Two months ago the Council held a public meeting on Timor-Leste (see S/PV.5457); the situation in the country seemed critical at that time. Sporadic violence, arson, looting and gang clashes continued to take place and the direction of events still seemed unclear. Since then, the overall security situation has been stabilized and the emergency phase has passed. The European Union commends the countries that responded positively when they were asked for help. The quick reaction of Australia, Portugal, Malaysia and New Zealand has been of immense importance.

In political terms, very significant steps forward were taken when Mr. José Ramos-Horta was appointed as Prime Minister on 10 July 2006 and when the new Government was formed soon after that. The European Union welcomes that political progress and wishes to congratulate Prime Minister Ramos-Horta and Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, for their challenging assignments. The European Union wants to assure the Security Council of continuous European support for Timor-Leste and the new Government.

It is necessary to emphasize, however, that it would be erroneous to believe that the situation in Timor-Leste is now stable and in order. The tension is still there, and the humanitarian needs of a significant part of the population are still clearly not being met. More than 150,000 people are still internally displaced; many refuse to return to their homes. Numerous weapons remain unaccounted for and are presumed to be under the control of both individuals and organized groups. That climate of fear is a clear sign of the prevailing fragility of the situation and of the need to address the underlying factors of the crisis, which is far from resolved.

The events of recent months will have to be analysed with seriousness and honesty. The real problems under the surface will have to be addressed in order to achieve national reconciliation. The European Union is pleased to note that that seems to be exactly what the new Prime Minister intends to do. The Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste, as requested by Mr. Ramos-Horta and announced by the Secretary-General, will have a significant role in that effort. The Commission is expected to report its findings by early October 2006.

The European Union also underlines that the demand for justice and accountability for the serious

crimes committed in 1999 remains a fundamental issue in the lives of many Timorese. The Union therefore welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on justice and reconciliation in Timor-Leste and its recommendations aimed at completing investigations into unresolved serious-crimes cases and promoting reconciliation and community healing. The presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 naturally underline the importance of political and national reconciliation.

The urgent goal of the international community is to support Timor-Leste in consolidating public order and pursuing reconciliation among all stakeholders and all levels of society. It is obvious that the United Nations will have a central role in that process. Consequently, it is obvious that a strengthened and long-term United Nations engagement will be needed as we ensure Timorese ownership and the sustainability of United Nations efforts.

The views of the Timorese Government — clearly expressed in the letter dated 4 August 2006 from Prime Minister Ramos-Horta addressed to the President of the Security Council — and the assessment presented in the report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) must be among the guiding factors when a decision is made on the size and form of the future United Nations mission after the mandate of the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) expires in a few days' time.

The United Nations should commit itself to providing substantial support in various sectors, including the rule of law, human rights, gender, institutional capacity-building, conflict resolution and comprehensive security-sector reform. It is essential that the core functions of the new multidimensional and integrated United Nations mission be carefully identified and that the mission's mandate be decided in a manner that avoids any unnecessary overlapping with current United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other development partners, which are already making very valuable contributions to the development of Timor-Leste. Efficient coordination, clear responsibilities and a clear division of labour are preconditions for success.

The European Union and its member States have been major development partners of Timor-Leste for years, and the Union continues to pay close attention to the situation in the country. The European Commission's Special Envoy to Timor-Leste, Mr. Miguel Amado, visited Dili quite recently to assess the current situation and to consider ways to strengthen European Commission cooperation with Timor-Leste, including by establishing a Commission delegation in Dili. The European Union is committed to continuing to support Timor-Leste and is confident that, in these times of difficulty, the United Nations will respond to Timor-Leste's call for help in an adequate manner.

The President: I now call on the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Cheok (Singapore): We express our appreciation to Special Envoy Ian Martin for his briefing and congratulate Foreign Minister Guterres. It is good to see him again.

Timor-Leste is in a time of need. The international community has responded to such need before. In 1999, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor was established; it was followed by the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor and, recently, by the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste. The question is, of course: What happens next?

It is our view that the Secretary-General's report provides the answer. It is an insightful and comprehensive piece with sensible recommendations. It was not conceived in a vacuum; it was based on the assessment mission led by Special Envoy Ian Martin. Mr. Martin and his team consulted a broad cross section of Timorese society and international stakeholders. It is clear that their observations and analysis contributed greatly to the quality of the report.

This is not just about the United Nations; Timor-Leste's leaders have also spoken. In a letter dated 4 August 2006, Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta said that

> "a robust police, military and civilian element is indispensable to our hard-won peace and freedom. There is a consensus among all stakeholders that the situation in Timor-Leste requires the establishment of a United Nations multidimensional and integrated peacekeeping mission" (*S/2006/620, annex*).

He also spoke of a strong civilian component, a police force of considerable strength and a small military force that would all be under the command and control of the United Nations. If those are the views of Timor-

Leste's leaders, then we should listen. The people of Timor-Leste are the ultimate stakeholders in this exercise.

Nation-building is a delicate process. Timor-Leste's troubles are a vivid reminder that reverses are possible, but that is no reason for discouragement. We should take setbacks in our stride, as rarely has there been a case of absolutely smooth sailing in nation-building. Indeed, this is motivation for us to stay the course and ensure success in the face of difficulty.

The Secretary-General's report rightfully identified priority areas. Ensuring security and stability is crucial. Here, we must thank Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal for their superb efforts. Security-sector reform is also key. To a large degree, institutional failures in the National Police Force of Timor-Leste and in the Armed Forces of Timor-Leste were at the core of this crisis; they need to be rebuilt. Moreover, there is a need for political reconciliation. Timor-Leste will also need electoral support in the run-up to and during the 2007 elections. Timor-Leste is in a transitional phase, and having both a large United Nations police presence and a smaller military component is essential. Those two components will contribute to the restoration of stability and law and order until the Timorese themselves are ready to fully reassume those roles.

Albert Einstein once said, "I never think of the future. It comes soon enough." Let me be a bit presumptuous and disagree. We need to think about Timor-Leste's future. We need to help it to put conditions in place to allow for its development as a stable and cohesive nation. In tandem, we need to assist with capacity-building for its institutions and its people. The Secretary-General's report correctly states that this will be a long-term commitment. The United Nations has been at the core of those efforts since Timor-Leste's independence. It will remain at the core of those efforts for the next few years. We should remain committed. If we get this right, we can all look forward to a brighter future for Timor-Leste.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Salgueiro (Portugal): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council. Before I start my remarks, I would like to greet Foreign Minister José Luis Guterres. It is an enormous pleasure to see him here again in this building and especially in the Council. I would also like to thank Mr. Ian Martin for his presentation of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Timor-Leste (S/2006/628) and his recommendations for a new United Nations mission. I also take this opportunity to commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Hasegawa, and his staff for their work in Timor-Leste.

Portugal concurs with the statement which the representative of Finland has made on behalf of the European Union. But in my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

Regarding the ongoing discussions on the mandate and the composition of a new United Nations mission in Timor-Leste, the Portuguese position is consistent with three main elements. First, we respect the sovereign will and the political independence of Timor-Leste. In this regard, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta sent a letter (S/2006/620, annex) to the President of the Security Council on 4 August 2006, which clearly sets out the expectations of Timor-Leste concerning the need for the establishment of a United Nations multidimensional and integrated peacekeeping mission.

Secondly, we welcome the Secretary-General's thorough assessment and the recommendations contained in the report. We praise the Secretariat's professionalism, which we have come to know very well since the days when we were negotiating the self-determination of Timor-Leste.

Thirdly, our own assessment is based on our deep bilateral commitment towards Timor-Leste, and especially on the fact that Portugal remains, by far, the largest donor to Timor-Leste, with cooperation programmes in many areas including justice, education, health, social protection, police, armed forces, customs, finances, and so on.

Although the situation has been stabilized overall, we still face the very serious security and humanitarian repercussions of the crisis. Thousands of weapons remain unaccounted for and could be used in further actions to wreak violent destabilization. A climate of fear still prevails, with about 150,000 internally displaced people, which is a huge number for such a small country. In regard to the police and military weapons that have not been accounted for, we must acknowledge that the international forces have achieved only modest results. It will be difficult to

achieve sustainable political reconciliation in an environment where individuals and groups with political grievances are in possession of illegal arms.

At the Council's last open meeting on Timor-Leste, on 13 June 2006 (see S/PV.5457), I stated that Timor-Leste needed the universality and impartiality of the United Nations, which must once again take a leading role. The reality on the ground has reinforced our belief. Only the United Nations can successfully lead the efforts to facilitate political dialogue and reconciliation, restore and maintain security and ensure that the 2007 elections will be peaceful, free and fair.

In line with the expectations of Timor-Leste, as expressed by Prime Minister Ramos-Horta in his letter of 4 August, and as reiterated today by Foreign Minister José Luis Guterres, Portugal will review the current bilateral arrangement regarding the presence of its gendarmerie force in Timor-Leste, with a view to have that force and other elements ready to serve under the command and control of the United Nations.

I recall here that one of the key recommendations in the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, which is widely known as the Brahimi report, regarding the importance of clear, credible and achievable mandates, is that

> "Security Council resolutions should meet the requirements of peacekeeping operations when they deploy into potentially dangerous situations, especially the need for a clear chain of command and unity of effort." (*S/2000/809, para. 64(c)*).

Portugal fully supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report regarding the police and military components of the follow-on mission in Timor-Leste. Also, and as a future contributor to the mission, we attach great importance to the security of all United Nations personnel, including our nationals, and we consequently deem it necessary that this mission be backed by an adequately sized military force under the command and control of the United Nations.

For both political and operational reasons, we would have great difficulty in understanding any solution which ignored the sovereign will of Timor-Leste, the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the lessons learned of the recent past concerning the need for a clear chain of command and adequate security for United Nations personnel in peacekeeping missions.

We welcome the establishment of an Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste, as outlined in the letter of 8 June 2006 from Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta to the Secretary-General (S/2006/391, annex), and especially the fact that all relevant actors considered this to be a necessary step to reach a political settlement and uphold the rule of law.

The demand for justice and accountability for serious crimes committed in 1999 remains a fundamental issue in the lives of many Timorese. Portugal welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on justice and reconciliation in Timor-Leste (S/2006/580), and particularly its recommendations aiming at the completion of investigations into outstanding cases of serious crimes and the need for reconciliation and community healing.

Much remains to be done in this regard, as the recent outbursts of violence have demonstrated, namely the attacks on several key Timorese judicial institutions, causing serious concern regarding the potential loss of vital records with the attendant security implications for victims, witnesses and suspects alike. The prevailing climate of impunity is a major obstacle to long-lasting social reconciliation and political stability. It is imperative to establish the truth and achieve accountability, in keeping with international human rights standards.

Portugal recalls the responsibility of the international community and of the Security Council in relation to Timor-Leste. Portugal will remain committed to the consolidation of peace, democracy and the full political independence of Timor-Leste.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Mr. President, let me start by congratulating you on your assumption of your important post and by expressing my pleasure at seeing you in the Chair. We are confident that, under your able stewardship, the Council will effectively discharge its tasks, dealing with the issues of high importance being brought before it in this very busy month.

My appreciation goes to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2006/628) and to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Ian Martin, for his informative briefing.

Permit me to join the previous speakers in welcoming His Excellency Foreign Minister José Luis Guterres of Timor-Leste to today's Council meeting. His statement before the Council provides guidance for the creation of a new mission of the United Nations in his country.

We continue to follow closely the situation in Timor-Leste, and we are heartened that the country has managed to emerge from the recent crisis there. The new Government, which enjoys support from a wide spectrum of Timorese society, has been installed. In this regard, words of appreciation go to Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal for their valuable efforts.

In order to achieve sustainable peace and stability in the country, we continue fully to support Timor-Leste in advancing political dialogue and community reconciliation, particularly by addressing the underlying causes of the recent crisis. We are confident that, under the wise guidance of its leaders, Timor-Leste will be able to put its democratization process back on track and resume its national development on a stronger foundation.

Despite all the hardships being faced by Timor-Leste on account of the recent crisis, that country continues to enjoy an excellent level of bilateral relations with Indonesia. The rapport between leaders of the two countries is firm, assured and growing. President Xanana Gusmão of Timor-Leste flew to Bali to meet his counterpart, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, on 17 June 2006, to brief the latter on the situation in his country and the actions being taken by his Government to address the situation. Indonesia has shown its full understanding of the situation and is demonstrating its commitment to help Timor-Leste to address the crisis, including by providing humanitarian aid. As Timor-Leste's closest neighbour, we are very interested in seeing a stable, prosperous and democratic Timor-Leste. We are fully aware that dealing with the daunting challenges it faces is beyond that country's existing national capacity. Hence, it is the responsibility of the international community to continue assisting that country to achieve self-sufficiency. In this regard, we support the establishment of a new United Nations mission in the country.

We believe that the United Nations mission, which is recommended for an initial period of 12 months, should focus on helping the country to meet the pressing challenges ahead and the real needs of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste. These include the promotion of national reconciliation and social cohesion; capacity-building of various State and Government institutions, including the enhancement of further public confidence in them; poverty reduction and humanitarian assistance; and democratization, which includes electoral assistance for the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007.

Let me now turn to the issue of justice and reconciliation for Timor-Leste. We hope that the Secretary-General's report on this subject (S/2006/580) provides a new departure for the Organization in dealing with this issue in a practical and feasible manner. As has been stated on many occasions, the Governments of Indonesia and of Timor-Leste are committed to resolving residual problems from the past and to opening a new chapter by developing forward-looking relations and cooperation. In this spirit, the two countries agreed to settle the human rights violations reported in East Timor in 1999. Due to the complexity of the problem, an innovative and creative solution has been devised that would also strengthen further good relations between the two countries in the future.

The Commission of Truth and Friendship (CTF) has achieved meaningful progress. It has agreed on the elaboration of basic issues relating to its terms of reference and has adopted a glossary of terminology as the operational reference; these constitute clarification and the CTF's creative interpretation of various provisions in its terms of reference, including the one on amnesty, on the basis of relevant international norms, standards and practices that take into account local needs and challenges. It has also adopted guiding principles as the overarching guide to document review, fact-finding methods, information clarification with respect to relevant parties, naming names and standards of evidence.

As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, the CTF has identified 14 groups of priority cases. These consist of high-profile cases that are often referred to in media reports; events that continue to be commemorated emotionally by Timor-Leste society as a collective memory; cases that reflect crimes as defined in article 7 of the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court (ICC) regarding crimes against humanity; and cases referred to in the final

report of the Indonesian national Commission of inquiry into Human Rights Violations in East Timor in 1999, and other documents, as mandated in article 14 of its terms of reference.

The CTF is currently focusing on completing document review through document matching, corroboration and analysis, based on the report of the Indonesian national Commission of inquiry into Human Rights Violations in East Timor in 1999, the documents of the proceedings of the Indonesian Ad Hoc Human Rights Court, the documents of the Special Panel for Serious Crimes and the report of the Timor-Leste Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation.

While completing the document review and analysis, the CTF has now moved into the second stage of its work programme, namely, fact-finding, which employs four methods: statement taking, submission, investigation and hearings.

In order to garner support and input, the CTF has carried out consultations with other stakeholders in both countries, including parliaments, civil societies and Government officials. With a view to expanding its vision and getting inputs, the CTF has invited international experts and prominent figures to share their knowledge and experience.

On a regular basis, and as required in its terms of reference, the Commission reports to the two Governments on progress, as well as on challenges and obstacles it encounters in implementing its mandate. The heads of State of Indonesia and Timor-Leste, on 7 February 2006, agreed to extend the CTF's mandate until July 2007. My Government has strong confidence in the work of the CTF and is very much committed to continuing to ensure its credibility.

In conclusion, Indonesia, as a neighbour which shares a common vision with Timor-Leste, based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, forward-looking, reconciliatory and mutually beneficial relations, will, for its part, continue to assist Timor-Leste to make further progress in consolidating peace, stability and democracy in the country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Tarragó (Brazil): I would like to thank the Ghanaian presidency for convening this debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. That country, as a new member of the international community, continues to deserve the support of the United Nations in its struggle to consolidate its independence.

I wish to extend my warmest welcome to His Excellency José Luis Guterres, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste. I also acknowledge the presence of Ambassador Luis Fonseca, Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, with whose statement we associate ourselves.

May I also mention the remarkable work done by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ian Martin, and his team. Their thorough and insightful report must serve as the basis for the deliberations on the future of the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste.

The situation in Timor-Leste in the last few months has reminded us of some valuable lessons in the field of peacekeeping. We have had bad experiences when the presence of the United Nations was shortened for budgetary reasons or to comply with artificial time frames. The drawdown of peacekeeping operations should only be carried out upon achievement of real progress in recovering from conflict and in building institutions. One cannot but recall that the precipitous decision to leave Timor-Leste might have contributed to the security troubles of the past few months.

The second mistake is not to give proper attention to national ownership in the peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes. While the support of the international community is valuable — indeed, indispensable — in order to be effective and welcome by the people, it must respect the sovereign decisions of the Timorese.

Planning and deciding on the mission are also essential features not to be dismissed in the case of Timor-Leste. Suffice it to recall the words of the Brahimi report just cited by the Permanent Representative of Portugal. The new mission should be endowed with a clear mandate and adequate means to fulfil it. Depriving the mission of the necessary means — personnel, financial or other — would only hamstring it in discharging its mandate and would probably entail further suffering and be more costly in the future.

My Government believes that the Council has a clear responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the people of Timor-Leste. We think that the Council will honour its commitment to Timor-Leste by taking the decision to create a new mission in line with the report of the Secretary-General, which has accurately captured the meaning of national ownership and taken on board the will of the Timor-Leste Government.

May I refer to the Brazilian Government's concern at a tendency to transfer responsibilities of the United Nations, and of the Security Council, to individual countries? While such expediency may help and be salutary in emergencies, it carries many risks if it is prolonged; risks that range from associating the United Nations with the condoning of "neo-trusteeship", to prejudicing the image of the United Nations as a neutral and impartial provider of assistance.

It will be critical for the credibility and implementation of the Council's decisions that the establishment of the new mission be made in full agreement with the Timorese authorities and that, whatever its configuration, the mission report to the Security Council periodically. It is our view that the new peacekeeping operation must comprise elements in all relevant areas. In particular, it should have a civilian component, including a strong electoral unit; a police component capable of ensuring public safety; and a small military component under United Nations command and control. Brazil is, at present, considering seriously the possibility of contributing troops to the military component of the mission, alongside contributions it can make to the other elements. But it would do so on the understanding that the mission will be truly multilateral and fully accountable to the Security Council.

Creating the mission is only part of the work. It is highly necessary that countries reinforce their bilateral cooperation with Timor-Leste in areas that are essential to a newly born State, such as capacity-building, electoral assistance, development planning and civil administration. The Brazilian Government has already taken steps to start new projects and to continue with the previous ones.

The efforts of the Timorese towards reconciliation and their search for justice should be equally acknowledged. We should support the Timorese Government's decisions that are meant to tackle the acute problems of development and to find ways to improve the well-being of its people. Instability and unrest will fade only once poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and other root causes of conflict are effectively addressed.

The ultimate responsibility for settling the present crisis lies with the Timorese Government and people. But the United Nations and its Member States have a share of the responsibility to assist that country in setting itself on the path towards peace and development. The way to do this is through respecting the will of Timor-Leste, as so ably expressed here by Minister Guterres.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): I congratulate the Ghanaian presidency, which is in the midst of its successful leadership of the Council. We welcome His Excellency José Luis Guterres, and congratulate him on his new role as Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste. We thank him for his important statement this morning. We also thank Special Envoy Ian Martin for his briefing.

The Council is engaged in the discussion of Timor-Leste in the context of the morning after the morning after. We therefore have the opportunity to apply lessons learned not only from recent developments in the country, but also from similar situations in other parts of the world.

As the international community, particularly the United Nations, ponders its subsequent involvement in Timor-Leste, my delegation believes that the following factors have to be taken into account. First, Timor-Leste ownership must be ensured in any peacebuilding plan for the country. It is important that the views, aspirations and sentiments of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste be factored into any decision to be taken by the Security Council, particularly when it concerns the deployment of a United Nations mission.

We acknowledge and endorse Timor-Leste's desire for the establishment of a new multidimensional integrated United Nations peacekeeping mission, which is also the recommendation of the Secretary-General contained in his report of 8 August 2006 (S/2006/628). That will ensure sustained domestic support and eventual success in the long run. However great outside efforts in support of Timor-Leste may be, they can only succeed to an extent based on the

effectiveness of the cooperation of Timor-Leste's Government and its citizens.

Secondly, the root causes which precipitated the latest crisis should be addressed. The Secretary-General's report describes in comprehensive detail the events of the past three months as a complex crisis with political, institutional, historical, social and economic dimensions. Action should therefore be geared towards providing solutions to the problems in those areas. Foremost is assistance in building and strengthening institutions of State. Progress in that area could have been maintained if the United Nations presence in Timor-Leste had not been prematurely diminished. The economic difficulties and deficiencies of Timor-Leste should also be addressed. We note that the new mission recommended by the Secretary-General includes components which will specifically tackle those issues.

Thirdly, it is necessary to listen to the views of all the major stakeholders in the issue — Timor-Leste, States in the region, friends of Timor-Leste, donors and troop contributors — so that the international community, specifically the United Nations, can make an informed decision on the next course of action for Timor-Leste. Today's meeting fulfils that need.

We need once again to invest time, effort and resources in Timor-Leste. We commend the immediate response of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal in deploying troops to quell the violence and maintain law and order in the country. Their actions show what countries in the region and friends can do to assist in alleviating crises and preventing them from further expanding. We hope that their valuable contributions will find a role in the new mission.

Ultimately, the future of Timor-Leste depends, to a large extent, on the Timorese themselves. Having gained hard-won independence, they should now get their act together. That means maintaining meaningful dialogue among national players, addressing faction-ridden splits, searching for employment opportunities for young people and focusing on developing new orientations and values that would promote tolerance and openness. Timor-Leste can remain on track if it follows a focused post-conflict peacebuilding development framework with the assistance of the international community. Also, the new mission should serve as an early warning device to alert the Timorese authorities and the international community about developments which could lead to an impending crisis. In that context, we believe that Timor-Leste is a prime situation for consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission. We wish to recall that several speakers, including the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, mentioned Timor-Leste at the inaugural meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Despite the events of the past months, Timor-Leste is still one of the best examples of a successful international enterprise engineered through the combined cooperative efforts of the United Nations and regional partners and players. The international community should continue to make Timor-Leste a success story. We will maintain our presence in the country and we are ready to contribute to successful peacebuilding programmes there.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): My delegation joins others in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of France, for his stewardship of the Council last month.

I wish to thank you and members of the Council for convening this public debate to consider the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 1690 (2006). I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Luis Guterres, for his invaluable briefing, and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ian Martin, for his comprehensive presentation of the report.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General. It is clear from the report that the process of nation-building and reconciliation is a highly complex and sensitive matter. At the same time, the formation of a sustainable democratic State will require a higher level of maturity on the part of the people of Timor-Leste. In that regard, we hope that the leaders of Timor-Leste will place great emphasis on the issue of the rights of the people. Given current developments, we firmly believe in the will and ability of the leadership and the people of Timor-Leste to tackle the crucial issues facing the country. Malaysia believes that, with political stability and sound economic and social planning, the economy will gradually progress and develop.

We would also like to commend the Security Council for coming to the aid of Timor-Leste in its hour of need, and especially for supporting the deployment of the international security force, which has played a significant role in maintaining peace and security in the country. As the Council prepares to re-engage in Timor-Leste, in establishing a follow-up mission it is crucial that the quality as well as the duration of the international presence be evaluated and improved. In that regard, Malaysia supports the establishment of a multidimensional and integrated United Nations peacekeeping mission, prioritizing the long-term needs of the people of Timor-Leste, and in that regard recognizes their immediate humanitarian and security concerns. We have confidence that the United Nations is able to meet Timor-Leste's need for economic development, education, recovery, transparency, capacity-building and justice in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Timor-Leste is an independent, sovereign member of the community of nations. In the exercise of its rights, the request contained in the letter dated 4 August 2006 addressed to the Secretary-General from the Prime Minister of the Republic of Timor-Leste should be the basis for serious consideration by the Security Council and the international community. The request for a strong civilian component, with a police force of considerable strength backed by a small military force under the command and control of the United Nations, is a matter of vital urgency for the mandate of the new mission, in conformity with the will of the Timorese people. The call was a manifestation of Timor-Leste's exercise of its rights as a sovereign nation. In that regard, we call on the United Nations and other international agencies, including the international security forces, to respect the spirit and decisions of the people of Timor-Leste.

Malaysia will continue to uphold its commitment to the collective attainment of global peace through its unwavering support of the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In August 2003, the Royal Malaysian Police deployed a self-sustained unit consisting of 125 personnel to serve in the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor to form the international police unit in support of the Timor-Leste national police. Currently, the Royal Malaysian Police continues to deploy a formed police unit of up to 250 police personnel under a bilateral agreement between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Timor-Leste.

The Government of Malaysia is continuously reviewing its position with a view to being further involved in Timor-Leste. In that regard, Malaysia looks forward to and is ready to meet our obligations in the form of making available a formed police unit of up to 140 police personnel for the new mission in Timor-Leste. Malaysia shall continue to provide competent and well-trained police officers to that component.

Finally, it is clear to Malaysia, judging from the Secretary-General's report, that the international community must assess and take stock of the progress and challenges faced by the Government and people of Timor-Leste, and that it has a common responsibility to contribute to Timor-Leste's progress and development in the period following the draw-down of the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste. It is crucial for us to meet the urgent and indispensable requirements of the country in its time of need. In that connection, my delegation looks forward to the adoption of a comprehensive draft resolution to meet the urgent needs of Timor-Leste.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Cape Verde.

Mrs. Lima da Veiga (Cape Verde): May I thank you, Sir, and, through you, the members of this Council for allowing the delegation of Cape Verde to participate in this debate, which is so important for Timor-Leste and for all those who genuinely wish to see that country treading the path of peace, stability and progress. Since this is the first time my delegation is addressing the Council under your presidency, let me congratulate you on assuming that important position. We wish you continued success in discharging your mandate.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his two very informative reports, and to Mr. Ian Martin, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his insightful briefing and assessment of the situation in Timor-Leste.

We also thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. José Luis Guterres, for his important statement.

Furthermore, we associate ourselves with the statement to be made by Ambassador Luis Fonseca,

Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

Sharing significant historical, political and cultural ties with Timor-Leste, Cape Verde has always supported the struggle of the Timorese for a free, independent and prosperous country, coexisting peacefully with its neighbours. We have therefore been following very closely the evolution of the situation on the ground.

Concerning the security situation, we are heartened to learn about the positive measures adopted by the Timorese authorities in order to foster reconciliation, confidence and dialogue within the population and among the main political stakeholders. Yet the root causes of the recent crises are still to be tackled. That is a prerequisite for the success of the State-building process and the holding of the first presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007. We therefore encourage the authorities and all stakeholders to demonstrate perseverance, tolerance and cooperation in order to speed up the process. Furthermore, steady back-up from the international community is much needed if that huge task is to succeed.

As part of the international effort to restore normalcy to the country, we commend the role played by Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal. However, as the Timorese authorities have themselves acknowledged, the current situation requires that the prevailing arrangements regarding the international forces be reviewed.

Therefore, and in line with the common position of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the Capeverdian delegation supports the call of the Timorese authorities for a robust, multidisciplinary and integrated mission that is adequate to the situation prevailing in Timor-Leste. With a small military component placed under the control and command of the United Nations, such a mission would be very instrumental in consolidating peace and stability and in assisting in the preparation of the electoral process, in full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Timor-Leste.

We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General has given due consideration to that request and has incorporated it into its report. We are confident that the proposals made in the report deserve the indispensable adherence of the members of this Council and that the mission will be given the necessary resources and means to successfully carry out its mandate.

Lasting peace and stability in Timor-Leste will be achieved only when the country's development challenges are addressed in a comprehensive way. In that context, we are heartened by the political determination and leadership of the Timorese authorities in launching long-term initiatives and plans with a view to reinforcing the still fragile internal stability, consolidate and maximize the major progress achieved in State-building and meet the challenges ahead in the political, judicial, legal, economic and social sectors. Those efforts deserve firm, generous and sustainable support from the international community.

That is the reason my delegation welcomes the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the ways and means to reinforce security and to assist the authorities in promoting development that is pro-poor, gender-sensitive, youth-focused and aimed at enhancing institution-building, governance and democracy. Cape Verde stands ready to continue to cooperate with Timor-Leste and the international community towards the achievement of those goals. Cape Verde experts are already assisting the Timorese authorities in capacity- and institution-building in the fields of justice and public administration, under a framework of international cooperation. On the bilateral level, Cape Verde and Timor-Leste have already agreed on plans and programmes to foster a fruitful partnership in areas of common interest.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of the Cuban delegation, allow me to commend you, Sir, on the work you and your team have been carrying out in the presidency of the Security Council this month. I would also like very much to welcome the presence at this meeting of Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste. We thank him for his valuable statement he made this morning. We also welcome the presence and statement of Mr. Ian Martin, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste.

The situation in Timor-Leste is the result of the structural underdevelopment of that Asian nation and one of the most telling cases of the nefarious consequences of colonialism and of the unjust and

exclusive current international order. When it comes to the situation in Timor-Leste and other third world countries, attention in the United Nations is almost always focused exclusively on security issues. In practice, little or no attention is given to the urgent and serious structural, economic and social problems afflicting those countries. The eradication of poverty and underdevelopment is a key prerequisite in the maintenance of international peace and security. There can be no peace without development or development without peace.

With regard to security issues, the efforts of the international community in Timor-Leste, as in any other country, should fully respect the sovereignty and independence of that State. The Government of Timor-Leste has clearly stated its position as to the form that the presence of international actors in the country should take under a United Nations mandate. Cuba believes that the wishes and interests expressed in that regard by the Government and people of Timor-Leste should be duly taken into account by the Security Council.

The challenges to be overcome by the people and Government of Timor-Leste in the coming years require enormous resources that are far beyond the capacities of a State with limited resources. Genuine international cooperation with that country, based on respect for its sovereignty, will be one of the main ways to prevent conflict and strengthen peace. The international community has a moral obligation to help Timor-Leste to build a future of political stability and sustainable socio-economic development. It must undertake a serious commitment to assist Timor-Leste's Government in training human resources and establishing the infrastructure that this Asian country so urgently needs.

Cuba, a small country that has for more than 45 years been subject to the most brutal and merciless economic, financial and commercial blockade ever suffered by any country, has continued its modest cooperation with Timor-Leste. Cuba's cooperation with that country extends to various sectors, but primarily to the area of health care. Cuba's medical assistance has included treating 440,849 patients, assisting in 3,620 births, carrying out 2,198 surgical operations, administering vaccinations to 7,496 persons and saving over 6,000 lives.

Despite the situation experienced by that country, Cuban aid workers, who are strictly committed to the principle of non-interference in Timor-Leste's internal affairs, have remained at their posts. In particular, Cuba's medical brigade — which is made up of 274 health workers, of whom 206 are medical doctors — has been a model of selfless cooperation, saving lives under the most difficult conditions. In addition to providing basic and specialized health services, that team is holding classes and running the recently opened school of medicine, which began classes in December 2005 with 60 students. Moreover, 40 clinical laboratory technicians are finishing their studies and 22 x-ray technicians are currently being trained. As a complement to that effort, 470 young people from Timor-Leste are studying in Cuba, most of them preparing to begin their medical studies in our country and others to enrol in other specialties.

We are not here to lecture. What Cuba is doing today for Timor-Leste is just a modest example of how much more could be achieved in that country through international cooperation and solidarity, mainly by those States with larger economic and financial resources. We are certain that more could also be done for Timor-Leste in the context of the United Nations. We hope that this Security Council debate will contribute to defining short-term strategies that are in line with the real needs of the people of Timor-Leste.

Lastly, my delegation would like to reiterate that the people of Timor-Leste can always count on Cuba's unwavering determination to continue to strengthen its assistance and solidarity. In so doing, we will be meeting a duty and honouring a debt of gratitude to the peoples of the third world — in this case to the people of Timor-Leste, who have always demonstrated their resolute and constant friendship and solidarity with my country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on Timor-Leste and for his recommendations on the future involvement of the United Nations. I would like to commend in particular the work of Special Envoy Ian Martin and his assessment team, who have produced a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing Timor-Leste today. While there are some elements of the report that do concern us, on the whole we believe

it provides a very sound blueprint for United Nations engagement with Timor-Leste in the coming years.

Given the lateness of the hour, my statement will be a shortened version of the statement that is being circulated.

The security situation in Timor-Leste has begun to stabilize. It remains clear, however, that outbreaks of violence are still possible and that international assistance will be required for some time to guarantee the safety of the Timorese people. The stability that has been achieved has allowed initial steps to be taken towards political and social reconciliation, a process that must be protected and encouraged.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the multitude of difficulties that the new United Nations mission in Timor-Leste will face. Against that background, New Zealand wholeheartedly endorses the report's emphasis on a sustained commitment and a coordinated approach. We believe that we should articulate that commitment by giving the new United Nations mission an extended initial mandate and strongly affirming that that mandate must be renewed. Our long-term commitment to Timor-Leste is likely to be counted in years, not months.

We support the call for a compact between Timor-Leste and the international community to ensure coordination between the mission and Timorese Government priorities, plans and budgeting processes. The building of the new mission in Timor-Leste must be done in a carefully coordinated way with the United Nations funds and programmes, multilateral donors and bilateral partners.

It is clear that the new mission must have strong and dynamic leadership. The new special representative will need flexibility in his use of resources and must convey a sense of vision and authority to the Government and people of Timor-Leste.

As the report notes, the failures of the Timorese defence and police forces are interconnected. We welcome, therefore, the call for a holistic review of the security sector encompassing reform of both defence and police. That should involve "first principles" discussions with the Timorese Government and civil society on the nation's real security needs and the structures that are best suited to meeting those needs.

In terms of military support for the new United Nations mission, New Zealand is comfortable with the recommendations contained in the report. We realize, however, that consensus has not yet emerged around those arrangements, and we look forward to working closely with all interested stakeholders to find a solution that meets all of our concerns. From New Zealand's perspective as one of the contributors to the current stabilization force, it is important that the military presence in Timor-Leste, however it evolves, enjoy broad-based support and clearly recognized international legitimacy.

The report proposes a substantial United Nations policing component. New Zealand remains concerned that the number of police being sought may be too great. The United Nations police will have a short-term role in front-line policing, but we hope they will be able to move quickly to working with the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL), aiding in its reform and recovery.

We note that the placing of United Nations police in front-line policing positions and the subsequent gradual increase in the numbers of PNTL patrolling alongside them will not of itself lead to the creation of a new and robust PNTL. That process has been relied on in the past and has failed. The rebuilding of the PNTL must be a deliberate process based on one training model and led by police trainers from a single bilateral partner.

The recommendations in the report relating to justice and human rights are of crucial importance. New Zealand has consistently supported the work of the Serious Crimes Unit, and we are pleased that its investigations will resume.

We also consider it vital to address the problems confronting the day-to-day functioning of the criminal justice system. To be effective and durable, all the institutions of government must connect with all Timorese. We hope that, as part of its work on institutional capacity-building and governance, the mission will encourage the full functioning of government, including the justice sector, in both official languages — Portuguese and Tetun.

Finally, we continue to urge the Timorese leadership to work together to regain the confidence of its people. Now is the time for strong and united leadership. In that context, may I congratulate Foreign Minister Guterres on his appointment and thank him

for his update and for his words of determined commitment.

We are relying on Timor's political leaders to take responsibility for the future of their nation and to rebuild respect for the political process. We are encouraged by the first steps; they must continue, and we must do all we can to provide sustained support.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Hill (Australia): We would like to take this opportunity to thank Special Representative Hasegawa and the staff of the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) for their dedicated efforts. We also thank Ian Martin and his team, and congratulate them on a thorough and professional investigation into the situation in East Timor. We congratulate Minister Guterres on his appointment and wish him well for the future. The international community was quick to respond to the deterioration in the situation in Timor-Leste with the dispatch of an international stabilization force, which has successfully restored security and stability.

We have now all had the opportunity to consider the Secretary-General's comprehensive report and must focus on moving forward, in partnership with Timor-Leste, to secure that country's future stability, security and prosperity. Australia has been at the forefront of efforts by the international community to assist Timor-Leste. Along with Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal, we dispatched troops and police to Timor-Leste in response to the crisis. We contributed 8 million Australian dollars to address humanitarian aspects. We have provided 450 million Australian dollars in development assistance to the country since 1999. We will provide an estimated 43 million Australian dollars during 2006 and 2007. That will involve a strong focus on strengthening governance institutions, including in law and justice, public administration and public sector financial management, and improving delivery of services to rural populations. And we stand ready to contribute to a new United Nations mission in Timor-Leste.

As a close friend and neighbour of Timor-Leste, Australia has a vital interest in ensuring that it develop as a stable democracy, and we are willing to take a leading role in the international community's efforts to ensure a better future for the Timorese people.

The United Nations must also continue to play a robust role in supporting Timor-Leste. The United Nations should focus its resources on those areas of key concern where the United Nations can make a difference.

We welcome the emphasis on support for political and community reconciliation contained in the Secretary-General's report. To ensure long-term stability, it is vital that the United Nations assist Timor-Leste in resolving political difficulties. We welcome the proposal to provide electoral assistance to Timor-Leste ahead of next year's elections. Those elections represent an important step in the country's political maturation, and it is in the interests of all of us to ensure their success. It is important, however, that efforts to support elections give priority to ensuring that Timor-Leste establish electoral institutions which are, and are accepted by all stakeholders as being, politically neutral, independent and professional in all respects.

We are pleased with the priority given to policing in the report. Public security is a prerequisite of building both a democracy and an economy. We accept, for the time being, the need to have a force with an executive capability. We are pleased with the emphasis on the community policing model, which will not only best address local needs but also help build public confidence.

We are pleased with the acceptance of the need to help build a sustainable Timor-Leste police force that will have the confidence and culture to be able to deal with any future crisis of law and order in a fair and just way. We will offer a significant contribution to policing.

The security task for the future is primarily a law and order one, but to be addressed by civilian police. However, we accept that for some time there will be a need for a military back-up to the police and for the additional security of the United Nations personnel and property that a military force can give. We also accept the desirability of support from a military force while a significant number of high-powered weapons remain unaccounted for.

We are currently contributing up to 2,000 troops to the international stabilization force. While we are gradually drawing down our contribution as conditions improve, we have indicated that we are prepared to continue to provide a force that is required to meet

both of the needs to which I referred. In consultation with Timor-Leste, we would seek regional participation in such a force, which would provide both a rapid deployment capability and security for the United Nations. That would ensure a flexible force with its own air mobility, which could, at short notice, be bolstered to meet unexpected circumstances — a force familiar with the environment and the tasks with proven command and control. It would be cost-saving and would enable the United Nations mission to focus on the tasks that can be best done by the United Nations and where a real need exists. With regard to both the policing and the military tasks, we believe it is important that the Security Council provide authority under Chapter VII to permit the effective functioning of the forces, together with the support that they are entitled to expect.

The international community is again ready to come to the assistance of Timor-Leste, and Australia will play its part. A new United Nations mission represents an important opportunity to repair and rebuild those institutions which have been damaged or destroyed during the recent crisis and to further strengthen those institutions which have shown resilience.

Above all, the United Nations and the many friends of Timor-Leste in the international community must lay the groundwork that will enable the Timorese people to take responsibility for their own affairs.

The President: I now call on Mr. Luis Fonseca, Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

Mr. Fonseca (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Security Council for inviting the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) to take part in this important meeting, which is expected to form the basis for decisions crucial for the future of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

The CPLP welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628) and its conclusions, which coincide to a large extent with the views that have been expressed in various United Nations forums on this subject.

I wish to commend Mr. Ian Martin for his efforts to help find a sustainable solution to the crisis in Timor-Leste. I would also like to express support for the statement delivered to the Security Council by Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Like the numerous other friends of Timor-Leste, CPLP member States followed with great concern the events that led to the situation now under consideration by the Security Council and were deeply saddened by their tragic results. On 18 June 2006, in the wake of those events, the CPLP Council of Ministers held an emergency meeting in Lisbon and adopted a political declaration expressing their countries' solidarity with the Timorese people, offering assistance and endorsing the request of the Timorese authorities for the establishment of a new United Nations mission with police, military and civil components that would support the stabilization and peacebuilding efforts. They also expressed the willingness of their countries to participate in such a mission.

A ministerial mission was dispatched to Timor-Leste to assess the situation and to offer assistance to the authorities in their efforts to restore stability and pursue the path of development, which had been interrupted by the events. The results of the ministerial mission were reviewed by the Sixth Conference of Heads of State and Government of the CPLP, held in Bissau on 17 July 2006, which reaffirmed its solidarity with the people and the authorities of Timor-Leste and reiterated the right of Timor-Leste to the full exercise of its national sovereignty in all respects, with the aim of building its future in peace and independence and without any restraints or limitations.

CPLP member States believe that they can make a positive contribution to the international efforts to bring peace, stability and democracy to Timor-Leste. Our member States have shown their commitment to and solidarity with Timor-Leste in the past by contributing to the country's development, both bilaterally and through international initiatives in the context of United Nations coordinated programmes. They are prepared to continue to contribute to the current international efforts within the United Nations framework to restore stability in Timor-Leste.

We are pleased to note that the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/628) on the future role of the United Nations in Timor-Leste contains positions expressed by the CPLP Council of Ministers. The report meets with our approval, and we support it. We

note that the report also emphasizes that the actions of the United Nations and of the rest of the international community in Timor-Leste will be undertaken in cooperation and coordination with the legitimate national Government. We agree that there is a need to establish a strong police force and a small military force under United Nations command and control. Full respect for the sovereignty of the independent nation of Timor-Leste and for its institutions is, in our view, a basic prerequisite for the success of our collective endeavour.

Reform of the security sector is a crucial task, on which a large part of the mission's attention and resources will be concentrated. The Secretary-General's report acknowledges the difficulties in the armed forces and the police force, requiring the coordination of efforts to reform those sectors. This is a matter of great importance about which serious decisions should be made — decisions that will require planning for the long term and careful thought as to the role and responsibilities of military forces in Timor-Leste's future.

The report also fully recognizes the need for better police training, for the strengthening of the operational independence and internal accountability of the police, and for credible, independent civilian oversight of police operations. In response to the observations and the appeal made in paragraphs 67 and 68 of the report, CPLP member States will consider active participation in the provision of assistance to that sector.

The assessment mission to Timor-Leste acknowledged that sustainable economic development must also be a central element in the mission's mandate and recognized the link between economic development and security, pointing out that poverty, high unemployment and a lack of foreseeable opportunities are underlying causes of the conflict.

Another very sensitive issue stressed by the CPLP is the dialogue among Timorese political forces, a condition essential for the country's development. That should be reflected in the mission's mandate, which must stress the need for political good offices and reconciliation. The CPLP ministers also underlined the importance of holding general elections in 2007 with a view to consolidating the democratic institutions of Timor-Leste, and they expressed their readiness to assist in ensuring the success of the electoral process. Electoral support is part of the mission's mandate, which must be accompanied by a much-needed programme promoting broad civic education and democracy.

Human rights, the administration of justice, institutional capacity-building, good governance, gender issues and public information are issues central to the mandate of the mission, whose structure will, we hope, enable it to accomplish its purposes.

We are aware that, at the present juncture in world affairs, a number of more pressing issues are attracting international attention. But that should not cause us to forget the plight of the Timorese people or the Timorese experience, which for some time appeared to be — and, we are convinced, still can be — a United Nations success story. The "compact" proposed by the Secretary-General appears to be a right step towards that goal.

Building a nation requires will, determination and the democratic participation of all. Four years as an independent nation is too short a period in which to achieve such far-reaching accomplishments. What the international community is expected to do is help the Timorese people return to the path of reconciliation, peace and development on which they embarked four years ago. That is not beyond reach; it will consist mostly of walking another mile in terms of the commitment they undertook when the new nation was welcomed as a Member of the United Nations. CPLP countries wish to play an active part in the international engagement to that end.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5513

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5513th meeting

Tuesday, 15 August 2006, 1.10 p.m.

New York

President:	Nana Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Makayat-Safouesse
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Omura
	Peru	Mr. Ruiz Rosas
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sitnikov
	Slovakia	Mr. Marton
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Brooker
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Manongi
	United States of America	Mr. Brencick

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2006/592)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-46821 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2006/592)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Haiti, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Cazeau (Haiti) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/592, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2006/648, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1702 (2006).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5514

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5514th meeting

Friday, 18 August 2006, 11.05 a.m.

New York

President:	Nana Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Ruiz Rosas
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott Sanders

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) (S/2006/628)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-47270 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Minute of silence

The President: Tomorrow, Saturday, will be the third anniversary of the bombing of United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad, in which 22 people lost their lives and hundreds more were injured on 19 August 2003. May I ask the members of the Security Council to join me in observing a minute of silence to honour the memory of those who were killed while assisting the Iraqi people in their pursuit of peace and stability?

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) (S/2006/628)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Timor-Leste, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The President: On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2006/628 and S/2006/580, which contain the reports of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) and on justice and reconciliation for Timor-Leste, respectively.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2006/660, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to documents S/2006/620, containing the text of a letter dated 4 August 2006 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to the President of the Security Council, and S/2006/651, containing the text of a letter dated 14 August 2006 from the same chargé d'affaires to the Secretary-General.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2006/660) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1703 (2006).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5515

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5515th meeting

Tuesday, 22 August 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Nana Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Peru	Mr. Pereyra Plasencia
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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06-47530 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Norway, Pakistan and the Sudan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gillerman (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 August 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2006/670 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council being held on Tuesday, 22 August 2006 regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mansour (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Gambari: Last Friday, the Secretary-General reported on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (see S/2006/670). The Council has been regularly briefed on the situation in Lebanon and northern Israel. Indeed, the Secretary-General's Envoys, Terje Roed-Larsen and Vijay Nambiar, are today concluding meetings in Israel, after earlier consultations in Lebanon, as part of the process of preparing the report requested by the Council in paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). Today's briefing will therefore be focused on the Palestinian issue. In the light of the emphasis, in paragraph 18 of resolution 1701 (2006), on the need for comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions — starkly highlighted by events of the last two months — it is necessary, in our view, to step back from the events of the past month and consider the state of the peace process in the region in the light of the developments of the past year. For that reason, I will not report in detail on the events of the past month alone, serious as they have been.

This time last year, Israel was disengaging from Gaza and part of the northern West Bank. Led by the Quartet, the international community was working to ensure that that step would lead the parties back to the road map, and to the revival of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory. Sadly, those hopes have not been fulfilled. Far from advancing towards the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, we have seen that vision slip further away during the past year. There are, in our opinion, several reasons for that unfortunate development.

The first is the political positions and actions of the parties. While President Abbas remains firmly committed to his platform of peace, the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, appointed pursuant to the 25 January elections, has not fully committed itself to the basic principles of the peace process: non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements. Although factional tensions persist, a broad spectrum of political and other Palestinian forces are currently engaged in a dialogue to put in place a national unity Government with a new programme. In the meantime, while efforts to strengthen Palestinian border management and the security services that fall under the purview of the President continue, the Palestinian reform agenda is largely frozen, and with it Palestinian compliance with road map obligations.

On the Israeli side, the coalition Government has stated a readiness to commence negotiations if the Palestinian Authority accepts the basic principles of the peace process and implements road map obligations. But Israel has not transferred approximately $500 million it owes to the Palestinian Authority under the Paris Protocol, and has itself failed to implement road map obligations, including the freezing of settlement activity and the removal of outposts. Meanwhile, it has been planning for the future based on unilateral moves to disengage from parts of the West Bank while consolidating Israeli presence in other parts.

The second measure of the stagnation of the peace process is the degradation of the Palestinian Authority, the most tangible symbol of Palestinian hopes for statehood, as well as of Israeli hopes for a viable partner. The Palestinian Authority was already facing serious difficulties at the end of 2005. While the international community praised aspects of the Palestinian Authority's response during the disengagement process, the Authority's performance in the months following disengagement was at best mixed. The wage bill continued to grow as the Palestinian Authority recruited more officers into the security forces, security in Gaza deteriorated, and rocket attacks on Israel continued.

By December of last year, key donors were reconsidering their support to the Palestinian Authority's budget, which was already depleted. The Authority's domestic revenues have plunged further since the January elections. The cumulative worth of value-added-tax transfers collected by Israel but withheld from the Palestinian Authority will be between $480 and $560 million by next month. Palestinian Authority workers, who support a third of the Palestinian population, have received only a fraction of their salaries over the past six months. Absenteeism in some areas of the civil service has now reached over 40 per cent.

Restrictions on movement mean that the Palestinian Cabinet has actually never met in one place, and that ministers are confined either to Gaza or to the West Bank. Moreover, several cabinet members, including the deputy Prime Minister, and now both the Speaker and the Secretary-General of the parliament, are in Israeli detention. Other ministers are in hiding or abroad, leaving ministries without policy direction and creating disillusionment among the managers and employees who remain at their posts.

Several ministry buildings in Gaza have been damaged by Israeli shelling. Ministries increasingly resort to United Nations assistance for fuel, transport support and office equipment. As an indicator of the deteriorating position of the Palestinian Authority, no annual budget was published for the year 2006. The Hamas Government's approach to running ministries — for example, its promotion of Hamas members into senior civil service positions — may have also contributed to disillusionment. There have also been constant tensions between the presidency and the Government over the security services.

Mechanisms such as the Temporary International Mechanism and the consolidated appeal of the United Nations itself have been put in place to ensure that basic goods and services are delivered and that minimum cash payments are made to the needy. But those mechanisms cannot replace the Palestinian Authority. They do not generate economic growth and they do not provide hope for Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority has shown major weaknesses in the past on security and on fiscal management. But today its capacity to deliver is in rapid decline. The continuation of that trend could lead to the collapse of a key provider, stabilizer and interlocutor in the region, to say nothing of Palestinian hopes for a Palestinian State.

A third measure of the state of the peace process is the most terrible of all, that is, suffering, destruction and death from violence. Israeli land, air and sea operations, despite being said to be aimed at militants or military targets, have killed large numbers of

civilians, including many children, and have caused heavy damage to civilian infrastructure such as private homes, bridges and power plants — particularly in Gaza, where violence is a daily fact of life. In the West Bank, too, Israeli incursions are a regular occurrence, particularly in Nablus and Jenin, often causing fatalities.

There have also been several Palestinian suicide attacks in Israeli cities over the past 12 months. The last was in April, but Israeli authorities report that they have foiled many other attempted operations. Israeli civilians living in towns and kibbutzes near Gaza have endured regular Qassam rocket attacks. No Israeli civilians have yet been killed by those rockets since disengagement, but there have been injuries. If the attacks continue, it will only be a matter of time before there are fatalities.

The cycle of attack and counter-attack only leads to increased human suffering, which is intolerable, on all sides. As an illustration, in the past year a total of 41 Israelis have been killed, and nearly 480 injured, by Palestinian violence. In the same period over 450 Palestinians have been killed, and over 2,500 injured, by Israeli violence. One hundred and ninety of those deaths occurred since the capture of Corporal Shalit, on 25 June, meaning that the rate of Palestinian casualties is comparable to the rate during Operation Defensive Shield, at the height of the second intifada.

Meanwhile, no progress has been made in securing the release of Corporal Shalit, despite calls for his unconditional release. His parents have not even received a "sign of life", which is the least his captors could provide. Nor have the long-standing efforts of President Abbas to secure Palestinian prisoner releases yet borne fruit, despite his unrelenting efforts.

A fourth reason for the lack of progress towards a negotiated two-State solution is the creation of facts on the ground that would appear to prejudice final-status issues. Settlement activities continue, with some 3,000 units reportedly under construction within existing settlements. And despite several statements of intent which have been reported to the Security Council, unauthorized settlement outposts have not been dismantled.

The barrier, large parts of which are on occupied Palestinian territory, is now 51 per cent complete, despite the July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Once it is finished, in addition to the 180,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem, approximately 60,500 West Bank Palestinians will reside in areas between the barrier and the Green Line, with restricted access to health, education and employment services in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

In East Jerusalem, the combination of settlement activity, including in the E-1 area, barrier construction and other administrative measures points to the encirclement of the city that is intended to serve one day as the capital of two States, while effectively dividing the West Bank into two separate geographical areas.

A fifth measure, in our opinion, is the economic situation, since development is a building-block of peace. The impoverishment in the Palestinian territories is more severe now than it has ever been, including during the period at the height of the second intifada. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, some 70 per cent of Palestinians are living below the poverty threshold, and 85 per cent of the population in Gaza is currently receiving food aid. One simple indicator of increasing Palestinian desperation is the fact that the number of applicants to the emergency job creation programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has doubled since December 2005.

The single biggest impediment to Palestinian economic growth, according to the World Bank, is the closure regime. The number of Israel Defense Forces-manned and unmanned physical obstacles in the West Bank has increased by 43 per cent since Israel's disengagement from Gaza, despite the terms of the Agreement on Movement and Access, which are designed to achieve exactly the contrary. Meanwhile, the Rafah and Karni crossings have been only partially operational, at rates far lower than foreseen under the Agreement on Movement and Access, in the light of Israeli security concerns. Although the recent trends have been positive, at least for imports, our monthly reports show that, during 2006, less than 10 per cent of Gaza's minimum daily export targets under the Agreement have been achieved. Rafah has been closed for all but two days of the past seven weeks, preventing people from leaving or entering Gaza. Thousands of Palestinian expatriate workers, who had come home for family visits, are at risk of losing their visas and jobs if they are not allowed to leave Gaza to return to the

countries where they work. Other aspects of the Agreement on Movement and Access, including the Gaza West Bank link and progress on the airport and seaport, are dormant.

The sixth measure of the state of the peace process is perhaps the most worrying development of the past year, difficult to quantify but easy to discern. It has been in the attitudes of ordinary women and men. Opinion polls suggest a woeful decline in confidence in the peace process and in the prospects for a negotiated settlement on both sides. This trend, already plain before the recent conflict between Hizbollah and Israel, may well have been strengthened by it. Few people on either side believe that an end to the conflict is in sight. On one side, the result could well be further radicalization and support for violence and terror, while, on the other, it could well be support for harsh and excessive military action and unilateral measures. Positions may thus be hardening, and they could harden further unless a credible political process is somehow revived.

I have described the reality of the peace process today by seeking to describe what has actually happened in the past 12 months. I have given reasons why, in our view, we have reached this sorry juncture in the Middle East peace process so that we can reorganize and address the challenges ahead of us all. The purpose is not to assign blame, no useful purpose is ever served by that. I also recognize fully that making peace is not easy. But the absence of a credible political horizon, while in large part a consequence of decisions, actions and inaction by the parties themselves, is also partly a cause of some of those decisions, those actions and that inaction. We must also remind ourselves, as the Group of Eight stated at its summit in July, that the absence of a comprehensive solution is the root cause of the region's problems. Progress towards a two-State solution would undoubtedly facilitate the resolution of conflicts elsewhere in the region, and vice versa.

The stalled state of the peace process should therefore be regarded as unacceptable, both on its own merits and because of its broader regional implications. There are many concrete steps, some immediate, which need to be taken in order to get out of the current crisis and back towards a political path. As the Secretary-General stressed on 11 August, something more is needed: a renewed international effort in which the various crises in the region are addressed not in isolation and not bilaterally, but as part of a holistic and comprehensive effort, sanctioned and championed by the Security Council, to bring peace and stability to the region as a whole. The tragedy we have witnessed in the last month should, in our view, be converted to an opportunity to take prompt, concerted action by all parties to resolve the problems and issues in the region, which have confronted us, without resolution, for far too long.

The President: I thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are strongly urged to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his thorough presentation.

Argentina notes with satisfaction that the parties are generally complying with the cessation of hostilities called for in resolution 1701 (2006). However, the incidents that occurred on 19 August demonstrate that the situation continues to be extremely fragile and underscore the need for the parties to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from taking measures that could affect the delicate balance achieved after intensive negotiations.

As the Secretary-General has said, the Israeli operation in the Bekaa valley last Saturday constitutes a violation of the cessation of hostilities. Regrettably, Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace continue, in contravention of the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) and other decisions of the Security Council.

We would like to recall that all States, and in particular the neighbours of Lebanon, have an obligation to fully comply with the arms embargo established in resolution 1701 (2006). Any transfer of arms not authorized by the Government of Lebanon is a clear violation of the obligations set out by the Security Council.

My country welcomes the fact that the Lebanese armed forces began to deploy in the south of the

country following the withdrawal of Israeli troops from some sectors. The priority for the forthcoming days will be to keep up and intensify that dynamic so as to attain the objective set out in paragraph 2 of the resolution: that all Israeli forces should withdraw from southern Lebanon and that the Government of Lebanon should fully fulfil its responsibilities between the Litani river and the Blue Line.

The assistance of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in that process is essential. We are grateful to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its efforts in recent weeks to accelerate the deployment of additional troops. We hope that after the circulation of the draft rules of engagement and concept of operations of UNIFIL it will be possible to ensure that substantive contributions to the force are made.

We should also continue to work to achieve the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hizbollah and to find a satisfactory solution to the problem of the Lebanese prisoners.

Looking beyond those issues, it is essential to establish foundations for a lasting solution to this conflict on the basis of the principles mentioned in resolution 1701 (2006), in particular with regard to the disarmament of Hizbollah and other militias, compliance with the arms embargo and resolving the outstanding territorial problems, especially in respect to the Sheba'a Farms. In this connection, we support the mission undertaken by Mr. Nambiar and Mr. Roed-Larsen and look forward to having a comprehensive report by mid-September.

With regard to the humanitarian situation in Lebanon, we express our appreciation for the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the humanitarian agencies. In the current circumstances the priority is to secure access to the affected population in southern Lebanon and to assist persons who are returning to their homes. The presence of a great number of unexploded munitions creates an additional challenge for these activities.

In relation to the aforementioned, it is essential that Israel lift the maritime and aerial blockades and suspend the restrictions imposed on the Lebanese land crossings. The Lebanese authorities, for their part, should assume their responsibilities with a view to ensuring that the lifting of those restrictions does not affect the implementation of paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 1701 (2006).

The tragic events during the last month between Lebanon and Israel should not distract us from what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Argentina is extremely concerned by the humanitarian crisis affecting the Palestinian people and by the death of innocent civilians as a result of the violence and the Israeli excessive use of force and Palestinian extremist activities.

We continue to attach importance to the immediate and unconditional liberation of the Israeli soldier and to the fulfilment by the Government of the Palestinian Authority of the principles set out by the Quartet. Likewise, we believe that Israel should immediately and unconditionally release all Palestinian officials and legislators, end military activities in Gaza and take urgent measures to contribute to the improvement of the humanitarian situation in that territory. Unilateral Israeli measures in the West Bank must immediately stop, as must any other practices that contravene international law.

The parallel crises in Lebanon and Gaza have demonstrated once again that there is no military solution to this conflict. Only negotiated political solutions will be sustainable in the long term. Argentina will continue to support a just solution to the problems of the Middle East, based on the resolutions of this Security Council, the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing on the situation in the Middle East.

As political, economic and humanitarian pressure on the situation is a source of serious concern. Now more than ever before, joint efforts by the international community are needed to prevent an escalation and to establish appropriate conditions for progress in the political settlement process in the region.

Over several weeks, the Security Council strained hard to find a way out of the Lebanese-Israeli crisis. The outcome of that intense activity was the unanimous adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), which if properly implemented would, beyond the Lebanese dimension, have great significance in reducing tensions in the entire Middle East region.

We are generally satisfied with how the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) is proceeding. The Lebanese army is gradually taking control of territory in the south of the country, while the Israeli army is withdrawing from areas it had occupied. The main task now is not to allow any disruption of this process, to ensure that the cessation of hostilities is maintained and becomes a lasting ceasefire, and to prevent attempts to undermine agreements that were so difficult to achieve.

While working to enhance positive developments in the Lebanese-Israeli settlement, we must not lose sight of what is taking place in Palestinian-Israeli relations. The situation in the Palestinian territories continues to be extremely unstable. Israel has not ended its use of force in Palestinian Authority areas, and this has led to an increasing number of victims among the civilian population. What is also destabilizing the situation is the practice of arresting heads of Palestinian self-governing bodies and members of the legislative body, which is leading to paralysis in the work of the autonomous governing structures.

Such developments once again confirm that it is impossible to fully resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict if a solution cannot be found to its root cause — the Palestinian problem. In the absence of such, the Security Council will continue to deal with chronic Middle East conflicts and to react to new challenges that constantly arise in the region. Therefore it is necessary to resume as soon as possible the Palestinian-Israeli political dialogue, which should aim at finding a constructive solution to all existing problems in relations between the parties.

Russia, through its contacts with the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, members of the Quartet of international mediators, countries of the region and the League of Arab States, continues actively to support effective, collective efforts by the international community to achieve lasting progress on a Middle East settlement in all its dimensions and on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace, the provisions of the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): I, too, would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing.

It has been 11 days since the passage of resolution 1701 (2006). We believe this resolution is an important step forward and, when fully implemented, that it will help lay the foundation for lasting peace in the region. The United States is now actively engaged with others to turn this opportunity into a reality.

The United States takes seriously the imperative of fully implementing resolution 1701 (2006), starting with its call to take immediate steps to extend financial and humanitarian assistance to the people of Lebanon. The United States has pledged $50 million in humanitarian assistance to Lebanon, over half of which has already been distributed. As President Bush announced yesterday, we will increase this humanitarian and reconstruction aid to more than $230 million in the weeks ahead. The President has also announced his intention to work with Congress to extend the availability of loan guarantees to help rebuild Israeli infrastructure damaged by Hizbollah's rockets.

In addition to alleviating the humanitarian problem in southern Lebanon, it is imperative that we move as quickly as possible to secure the peace by enhancing the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and providing robust rules of engagement. We urge potential troop-contributing countries to expedite their internal decision-making processes as we strive to reach our goal of an expanded 15,000-member international force. Delay in this case does not serve the interests of anyone, except of those who oppose a sovereign, free and democratic Lebanon, one which is no longer used as a base to launch terrorist attacks against Israel, killing its innocent civilians.

As we plan for this deployment, we should be encouraged that, broadly speaking, one of the important goals of resolution 1701 (2006) has been achieved — a cessation of hostilities. We are concerned, of course, by reports of sporadic violence, but we stress that resolution 1701 (2006) guarantees Israel's right to defend itself and its forces.

Israel has said that the operation in the Bekaa Valley this past weekend was targeted against arms shipments to Hizbollah from Iran and Syria. Such arms shipments are, of course, legally prohibited by the arms embargo established by resolution 1701 (2006) unless specifically authorized by the Government of Lebanon. All States must comply with their obligations to

observe it. Failure to strictly observe that embargo will significantly enhance the risk of future hostilities. The burden of abiding by the arms embargo, and the attention of the world, fall especially on Syria and Iran.

But resolution 1701 (2006) is not just about a cessation of hostilities. It correctly emphasizes not only the need for an end to violence but the need to address urgently the causes that have given rise to the current crisis, including the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers. It is impossible — indeed, dangerous — to divorce the two issues. If the international community applies only a temporary band-aid solution to the problem and allows Hizbollah to regroup and rearm, then the suffering of the people of Lebanon and Israel may very well intensify in the near future.

We must keep in mind that responsibility for this conflict rests squarely on the shoulders of Hizbollah. As President Bush stated unequivocally last week, it was an unprovoked attack by Hizbollah on Israel that started this conflict. Hizbollah terrorists targeted Israeli civilians with daily rocket attacks. Hizbollah terrorists used Lebanese civilians as human shields, sacrificing the innocent in an effort to protect themselves from Israeli response.

If we are to achieve the goal of lasting peace in the region, we must put an end to Hizbollah's operating as a State within a State. To do that requires that we address the backing of Hizbollah by Damascus and Tehran. Their continued support to Hizbollah in the form of financing and training and supplying armaments does not just perpetuate this crisis, it sustains it. Cutting off those supply lines, as mandated in resolution 1701 (2006), is a matter that can no longer be ignored. The United States calls again upon Iran and Syria to comply immediately with that resolution. The United States remains deeply concerned at the attitude of Syria and Iran in this crisis. The leaders of both States have called for the destruction of Israel in recent days.

We recognize, as President Bush stated last week, that the conflict in Lebanon is part of a broader struggle between freedom and terror that is unfolding across the region. We believe that full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) will lay the foundation on which to achieve a lasting peace and realize the goals outlined originally in resolution 1559 (2004) — a sovereign and democratically elected Government in Lebanon, free from coercion by all outside Governments.

The United States also remains deeply concerned by the ongoing crisis between Israel and the Palestinians, instigated by the 25 June attack by Hamas inside Israel, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed and Corporal Gilad Shalit was kidnapped. The United States is keenly aware of the humanitarian impact of the current crisis, which has been caused by the refusal of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority Government to govern responsibly. Indeed, the Hamas Government has made a strategic decision to reject peace and to continue to embrace terrorism. In order to ease the hardships faced by the Palestinian people due to the intransigent policies of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority Government, we have increased humanitarian assistance to more than $270 million, including more than $50 million in response to the emergency appeal by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for the West Bank and Gaza. We have also substantially increased our support for the promotion of democracy and civil society and the development of the private sector.

In the days ahead we look forward to the continued implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), but we cannot stress enough the urgent need to move quickly to implement fully the obligations imposed on us in accordance with that resolution. The price of failure in this case is to condemn the people of Lebanon and Israel to further violence and tragedy.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing.

In the past month the Middle East region has undergone two bloody conflicts. The peoples of Palestine, Lebanon and Israel all incurred heavy and saddening costs. We are deeply distressed and gravely concerned at this. With the concerted effort of the international community, the Security Council adopted resolution 1701 (2006) on this issue on 11 August, requiring parties to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict to cease hostilities in a comprehensive manner.

In the past week both Lebanon and Israel basically abided by their ceasefire commitments. We should say that this is a victory of diplomatic efforts. We hope that the Lebanese and Israeli parties will both earnestly honour their commitments, demonstrate the

greatest good will and do their utmost to implement resolution 1701 (2006).

The adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) opens a new chapter in the settlement of the Lebanese-Israeli conflict. Whether the current peaceful situation can be consolidated depends on the political will and efforts of the parties concerned. The next few weeks will be critical. We believe the top priorities for the international community lies in the following four areas.

First, the Lebanese Government must be helped to exercise effective control over its entire territory. To that end, the capacity and role of the Government's forces should be strengthened so that they can truly shoulder the responsibility for maintaining peace and security in Lebanon.

Second, the expansion of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) must be stepped up. Countries in a position to do so should swiftly contribute troops to ensure UNIFIL's early deployment.

Third, humanitarian assistance to Lebanon must be increased. Parties to the conflict should cooperate with the efforts of the international community, including ensuring safety in the humanitarian corridor. Israel should also lift the various blockades imposed on Lebanon as soon as possible.

Fourth, Lebanon should be helped to undertake post-war recovery and reconstruction. Currently the country is a scene of devastation and suffering, with everything screaming to be rebuilt. The international community should extend a helping hand so that Lebanon can re-emerge from the rubble of war.

While paying attention to the conflict between Lebanon and Israel, we should not forget the suffering of the Palestinian people. We are deeply concerned over the steadily deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. Once again we urge all parties concerned to abide strictly by international humanitarian law, avoid harming innocent civilians and assist and facilitate the humanitarian relief activities of the international community.

Both Israel and Palestine should create conditions for political settlements. The Israeli side should release the democratically elected Government officials of Palestine at an early date, while the Palestinian side should take measures and work towards an early release of the abducted Israeli soldiers.

The question of Palestine has always been at the centre of the Middle East issue. Without success and reasonable settlement of the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people, tension in the Middle East cannot be eased at its roots and genuine peace will not be realized. We hope that with the joint efforts of Israel and the Arab countries, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and on the principle of land for peace, the Middle East peace process can be revitalized and a comprehensive, just and lasting peace will be achieved in the region soon.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I am grateful to Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing and to the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670).

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

On Lebanon, the objectives of resolution 1701 (2006) are clear: to bring about a full cessation of hostilities, to create the space for an urgent humanitarian relief effort, and to begin a process leading to a permanent ceasefire and lasting peace.

The United Kingdom welcomes the progress already made towards achieving those objectives. The cessation of hostilities has largely held. The Secretary-General reports that this has greatly improved the frequency and quantity of humanitarian assistance to Lebanon, and we underline our full support for his efforts to secure the political agreement necessary for a long-term solution, including through the current visit to the region by Terje Roed-Larsen and Vijay Nambiar.

The progress in planning for the enhanced United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) deployment is encouraging. The priority now is to give UNIFIL the resources to do its new job and to turn the many welcome offers to contribute into forces on the ground, as some have already done. The United Kingdom has already made a firm offer of air and naval assets and stands ready to deploy them quickly if the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) takes up our offer.

But recent events have underlined the fragility of the cessation of hostilities and the need for both sides

and others in the region to avoid any action which could undermine it. It is also clear that the humanitarian effort faces serious challenges, not least in securing access to all those parts of Lebanon affected by the conflict. In that context, we support the Secretary-General's call for the air and sea blockade on Lebanon to be lifted as soon as possible.

No one should underestimate the difficulties inherent in securing political agreement on issues where the two sides have such divergent views. In this context, it will be important to find arrangements that facilitate direct contacts between the two Governments.

However, the progress reported by the Secretary-General is grounds for cautious optimism. It also reminds us why it was right to work for a resolution that had a realistic chance of making an immediate impact on the ground and that also looked beyond the short term and held out the prospect of a lasting solution. At the heart of that lasting solution, and at the heart of resolution 1701 (2006), is the need to pursue the twin objectives of Lebanese sovereignty and Israeli security. We need to achieve both if we are to deliver a lasting peace. That is why the Council unanimously adopted a resolution setting out a framework for re-establishing peace, security and stability in southern Lebanon on the basis of extending the Government of Lebanon's control throughout its territory, and in particular through implementation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006).

To achieve that, we look first and foremost to all the parties to respect the terms of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). But we also look to others with influence to play their part. This includes Syria and Iran. A key provision of resolution 1701 (2006) is the requirement to ensure an end to all arms shipments into Lebanon other than those destined for its sovereign Government. The attitude of Syria and Iran, as well as that of others in the region, will be central to our success in implementing this and other provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

We have also heard today about the continuing crisis in Gaza. During the past month, the focus of the Council and of the international community has, inevitably, been mainly on Lebanon, but today's briefing reminds us that the suffering of those caught up in this conflict has not been any less simply because the focus of our attention may, understandably, have been elsewhere. We continue to be deeply concerned about the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Gaza. The United Kingdom has just announced a £3 million contribution to the temporary international mechanism.

But, more generally, it is vitally important that all sides act to de-escalate this conflict and create the space for negotiations to resume. In particular, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of Corporal Shalit and an end to the firing of rockets into Israel. We underline the need, on the other hand, for Israel to act in accordance with international law and to protect civilians. Those members of the Palestinian legislature detained in Israel should be either released or charged and accorded due legal process. We are particularly concerned about the kidnapping of the New Zealand and United States journalists and call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Under-Secretary-General Gambari's briefing is also a reminder that real peace in the region, and, indeed, real sovereignty for Lebanon and real security for Israel can be achieved only on the basis of a lasting, comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. There is no military solution to these problems; negotiation is the only viable way to bring peace and prosperity to peoples throughout the Middle East. The Middle East remains a top foreign policy priority for the United Kingdom. Our Prime Minister is committed to doing what we can to help re-energize that process and plans to visit the region soon.

Our priorities in the medium term will rightly be Lebanon and Gaza. But ultimately, however, those issues cannot be solved independently of a solution to the broader problems in the region. But nor should progress in those two areas be held hostage to the overall objective. It is therefore vital that we work in parallel to resolve specific issues as soon as we can and, more broadly, to re-energize the Middle East peace process and create the conditions for an early resumption of negotiations based on the Quartet road map.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his thorough briefing.

Denmark aligns itself with the statement to be given shortly by Finland on behalf of the European Union.

Denmark is pleased to note that the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah by and large seems to be holding, that the Israel Defense Forces has initiated its withdrawal, and that contacts are ongoing between the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese armed forces on the schedule for the withdrawal of the remaining forces.

The situation is, however, still extremely fragile, as evidenced by the incident that took place this past weekend. Denmark calls on all parties to show the utmost restraint and to refrain from any action which could undermine the current ceasefire.

There is an urgent need to strengthen the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and to give it the capacity to implement the full mandate contained in resolution 1701 (2006), including enforcement of the arms embargo. As already announced, Denmark is, for its part — pending parliamentary approval — ready to support the naval component of an enhanced UNIFIL. Now that the outstanding issues concerning the rules of engagement and the concept of operations seem to have been cleared up, additional Member States will, hopefully, be able to provide similar specific pledges.

There is also a need to assist the Government of Lebanon through capacity-building and the provision of materiel to exercise its authority throughout its territory, not least to secure its borders and prevent the illicit delivery of weapons.

Denmark welcomes the urgency and diligence with which the Secretary-General has approached the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). It particularly welcomes the timely decision to dispatch Special Envoys Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen and Mr. Vijay Nambiar to the region in order to help facilitate negotiations on the political conditions for a lasting ceasefire, which would require, among other factors, the disbandment and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, as stipulated in resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). We look forward to receiving their proposals on implementing resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including proposals to settle the disputed border areas, such as the Sheba'a farms. There is also an urgent need to find a solution to the question of the abducted Israel soldiers and the Lebanese prisoners in Israel.

All Member States must actively back these efforts by the Secretary-General and his envoys through their own channels. As stressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark in the Security Council on 11 August (see S/PV.5511), Denmark pledges its full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard and stands ready to assist wherever possible.

In spite of the ceasefire, the humanitarian situation in Lebanon is still disturbing. It is of paramount importance that the Government of Lebanon receive support. The Government of Lebanon urgently needs the capacity to be the lead player in humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts. The Danish Government has already disbursed $4 million in support through bilateral and multilateral agencies. Danish experts have been seconded to United Nations agencies, and a Danish team is part of the general effort to clean up after the huge oil spill along the Lebanese coast.

We look forward to the donors conference in Stockholm next week where we expect United Nations agencies to be able to present revised plans. Substantial amounts have already been committed. It is important that both donors and agencies demonstrate flexibility so that the new efforts can be geared towards the real needs on the ground.

In addition to Lebanon, Denmark is particularly concerned about the situation between Israel and the Palestinian territories, in particular, in the Gaza Strip. There remain ongoing hostilities, the humanitarian situation is deeply worrying and the economy is almost completely broken down. Also, the political situation continues to deteriorate. I think that it is obvious that the long-term negative consequences for the territories as well as for the Middle East as a whole could be far more serious if we do not find a solution to all aspects of this crisis as soon as possible.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Corporal Gilad Shalit of the Israel Defense Forces and urge the Palestinian leadership to undertake all necessary efforts in this regard and to stop the firing of rockets into Israel.

We are also concerned about the detention of elected members of the Palestinian Government and legislature. This issue should be resolved without delay. We call on Israel to exercise restraint. Israel must ensure that its response is proportional and measured and carried out with full respect for a State's

obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in time of war.

Whether in Lebanon or in the Palestinian territories, all parties must do their utmost to avoid escalating the situation. The parties have to be ready to make concessions and to act responsibly and with a sense of proportion. Additional violence will only serve to promote the agendas of extremists. Only by returning to peaceful negotiations can we hope to reach a comprehensive political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has already generated so much suffering and hatred in the region.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement that will be made later by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I would like to commend Mr. Ibrahim Gambari for his briefing and welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670). France welcomes the determined action by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to ensure the full implementation of that resolution.

With regard to the situation in Lebanon, France is happy to note the first positive effects of resolution 1701 (2006). The cessation of hostilities has now entered, as of yesterday, its second week. As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report, the two parties have generally respected the agreed time of Monday, 14 August, for the cessation of hostilities.

The Israeli military operation in the Bekaa valley last Saturday was a source of considerable concern for us. France calls on all parties to demonstrate the utmost restraint and to respect the obligations incumbent upon them under the terms of resolution 1701 (2006). It calls upon them to continue and to complete, as soon as possible, the process of the parallel deployment of the Lebanese army and the withdrawal of the Israeli army. The extension of the authority of the Lebanese Government into the south is indeed a historic decision which is to be welcomed and supported.

Now, the international community must strive to ensure the achievement of several objectives: the unconditional freeing of the Israeli prisoners; the settlement of the sensitive issue of the Lebanese detainees in Israel; the immediate return of displaced persons to their homes and access by civilian populations to humanitarian aid; the lifting of the blockade against Lebanon; the respect by all of the embargo on illegal arms; and the reinforcement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) which must be diversified and made more robust so that it can safely accomplish its missions.

France is making every effort through its contacts with all the parties concerned to achieve, on the basis of resolution 1701 (2006), a long-term solution to the crisis in order to enhance the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon, as well as the security of Israel.

With regard to the Palestinian territories, France continues to be extremely concerned by the continuously worsening security situation and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. While the international community's attention has been focused since mid-July on the Lebanese crisis, France considers that the international community should renew its involvement in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to be a major source of instability and frustration in the region.

Of course, action by the international community cannot be a substitute for determined measures by the parties themselves, and those parties must respect their obligations. The Palestinian Authority must immediately take every necessary measure to put an end to the firing of rockets and other acts of violence against Israel and its citizens and to work for the freeing of the kidnapped Israeli soldier. The Palestinian Authority must also struggle, more than ever and with the greatest determination, against terrorism. We expect that the Hamas-led Government should finally respect the three principles established by the Quartet: to renounce violence, to recognize Israel and to accept prior agreements. We reaffirm our support for President Abbas and for all his efforts to strengthen the Palestinian national consensus on the basis of the objectives that he has been defending since his election to the presidency of the Palestinian Authority.

Israel, for its part, must end its disproportionate military operations against Palestinian towns and refugee camps. Those operations have, over the past few weeks, taken a very heavy toll in human terms, particularly among civilians, and in terms of considerable damage inflicted on basic infrastructure and vital equipment, as well as on the institutions of the Palestinian Authority.

In general terms, it is important that Israel refrain from any measures that might undermine the Palestinian Authority as an institution and as a future negotiating partner. The recent arrests of the President and the Secretary General of the parliament, as well as of the Deputy Prime Minister, are, in this respect, counterproductive. We once again call upon Israel to free the members of the Government and the Legislative Council and other Palestinian political leaders whom it has imprisoned.

At this critical juncture for the Middle East, it is essential that the international community work in a determined way to relaunch the peace process. That will require the updating the road map, in cooperation with the regional parties concerned. The goal must be to ensure that there is a negotiated political solution leading to the creation of a viable and sovereign Palestinian State, coexisting in peace and security with Israel.

In this respect, France continues to be extremely concerned about the continuing settlement process and the building of the separation barrier within occupied Palestinian territory. Both of those actions compromise the geographic, economic and political viability of the future State of Palestine.

In conclusion, I would like to recall something that should be obvious to all: there is no military solution to the conflicts in the Middle East. The deadly conflicts that we have recently witnessed in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip can lead only to further destruction, greater hatred and increased radicalism. Only dialogue and negotiation can enable the people of that region to realize their legitimate aspirations for peace, prosperity and security.

Diplomatic efforts are now under way by the Secretary-General and a certain number of countries that are in a position to facilitate the achievement of a lasting solution to those two crises, which is essential for the future of the region. France will continue to work tirelessly for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement that is based on Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The President: I would like to note that Ambassador Duclos is making his last appearance in the Security Council in his capacity as Deputy Permanent Representative of France. I understand that he is leaving for another important posting. On behalf of the Council, I would like to express our gratitude to him for his cooperation and for his positive contribution to the work of the Council. I am confident that he will use the knowledge and experience acquired in the course of his work here in discharging his new responsibilities. We wish him well.

Mr. Kitaoka (Japan): I would like to join colleagues in thanking Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing.

In the past month, we have again witnessed widespread, deeply troubling changes in the Middle East. It is urgently necessary to create conditions for a cessation of violence that will be sustainable and to lay the foundations for a permanent solution to the problems there.

With regard to the situation in Lebanon and Israel, the Security Council, by adopting resolution 1701 (2006), has effected a cessation of hostilities and created the political framework for a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the problems. In general, the parties concerned have honoured the terms of the resolution in that regard. There have also been some encouraging steps towards the expansion of the authority of the Lebanese Government over all of its territory in this first week after the resolution was adopted. These include the withdrawal of the Israeli army from some of the positions inside Lebanese territory and the start of the deployment of the Lebanese armed forces. However, the situation remains extremely fragile, as was demonstrated by the Israeli military operation in eastern Lebanon on Saturday, 19 August.

Japan continues to call upon both parties to exercise maximum restraint and to do their utmost to ensure that the cessation of hostilities holds and that it becomes a durable ceasefire. We support the proposals and observations made in the Secretary-General's report (S/2006/670) to that end. We attach particular importance to three of them.

First, in order to ensure the early deployment of the reinforced United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Japan strongly hopes that Member States in a position to do so will immediately make contributions. Secondly, with respect to the humanitarian and reconstruction activities that are needed to stabilize the situation, we greatly appreciate the commitment and dedication that the relevant United Nations and other organizations have shown in difficult circumstances.

Japan, for its part, is giving consideration to providing assistance to Lebanon so as to contribute to the best of its ability to promoting stability there and in the region as a whole.

Thirdly, on the subject of the political process, Japan strongly urges the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel to arrive at an agreement, as stipulated in the resolution. We also request the Secretariat to draw on its collective wisdom to present a realistic implementation plan in the next report of the Secretary-General, which is scheduled to be released in September. We expect that the United Nations delegation, comprising Mr. Nambiar and Mr. Roed-Larsen among others, will play an important role in this regard.

Japan is deeply concerned about the continued deterioration of conditions in Palestine — the central issue in the Middle East — in particular since the abduction of Israeli soldiers about two months ago. Japan calls on Israel to exercise the utmost restraint and to seek to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure.

We also urge that a number of steps be taken as a matter of the highest priority. First, Israeli soldiers held in Gaza and Lebanon should be returned unharmed. Secondly, terrorist attacks against Israel must cease. Thirdly, Israel should end its military operations and its forces should withdraw from Gaza as an early date. Fourthly, the detained Palestinian ministers and parliamentarians should be released.

Japan has strong hopes for the early resolution of these matters, which are of the highest priority, following the resumption of cooperation with regard to security and cultural engagement, both among Palestinians and with Israel. To that end, it is more necessary than ever that the Palestinian Authority, Cabinet, led by Hamas, engage in the peace process through peaceful means based on existing international agreements and obligations.

Furthermore, it is of vital importance that leaders in the region and the international community continue actively to engage in diplomatic efforts. Japan, for its part, has conveyed to both parties on several occasions its firm belief that there is no alternative but to work together towards coexistence and mutual prosperity. We have, therefore, called for Israel to exercise the maximum restraint and for President Abbas to provide the necessary leadership so that these goals can be achieved.

Japan is also very concerned at the heavy toll in innocent civilian lives in Palestine and Israel and at the extreme deterioration of the humanitarian situation of Palestinians. We believe it is essential that the international community, including Israel, continue to provide humanitarian assistance. I should like to note that Prime Minister Koizumi, during his visit to the region in July, expressed his support for President Abbas and announced his decision to extend a total of $25 million to help the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, Japan will continue to participate actively in the discussions in the Security Council, while also pursuing its own diplomatic efforts, in cooperation with all concerned countries in the region, with a view to defusing the crisis and restoring calm and stability to the region.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): Like other speakers, I wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, for his thorough briefing today.

As Greece fully associates itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union, I shall be brief.

Over approximately the past two months, we all became witnesses to an incredible tragedy in the Middle East — one with severe repercussions not only for Lebanon, but for the entire region. With the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council took a bold and ambitious step not only to ensure that there would be a full cessation of hostilities between the warring parties, but also, at the same time, to provide a sound framework for the achievement of a political solution. That solution would form the basis for a lasting ceasefire and, eventually, for a lasting solution to the problems underlying the current conflict in Lebanon.

In that context and owing to the complexities of the several issues at hand, it is understandable that negotiations within the Council took longer than many of us would have preferred. This crisis, however, forced all members of the Council, and the international community as a whole, to revisit and re-examine in detail the dynamics at play in this troubled region.

During the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), a number of representatives, including Greece's Foreign Minister, stressed the need to reinvigorate and relaunch in earnest the Middle East peace process, in particular with regard to the question of Palestine. As we say in Greece, we cannot hide behind our fingers, that is to say, we cannot continuously ignore and avoid the realities and the truth. The Palestinian question lies at the heart of developments in the region. We must all do our share.

The international community must not lose sight of the plight of the Palestinian people and their legitimate aspiration for statehood. Without a just and viable solution to the Palestinian question, peace in the Middle East will remain as elusive as ever. The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is dire and a cause for grave concern. We fully share the Secretary-General's concerns over the continued killing and injuring of hundreds of civilians, including children, in Gaza by Israeli forces. Likewise, the arbitrary arrest of many senior Palestinians is a cause of particular concern, since it further undermines Palestinian institutions, which must be preserved if a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to be achieved.

The long-term effects of the crisis in Lebanon on the wider region will depend to a large degree on how all the players in the region and the international community react to it and decide how to deal with it, as well as how to handle the entire problem of the Middle East in all its forms, and how to promote long-term solutions. Indeed, the current crisis can be turned into an opportunity — an opportunity for all involved to realize that causes cannot be promoted or achieved through violence and, at the same time, that security cannot be guaranteed by military means alone.

The principles that should form the basis for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region are well known. These include all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

In another bold and ambitious step, the Security Council, by adopting resolution 1515 (2003), endorsed the Quartet's performance-based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and called on the parties to fulfil their obligations under the Road Map with a view to achieving the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security. We reiterate that call here today. At the same time, we call on the international community, in particular the Quartet, to remain actively committed and dedicated to assisting the parties in achieving that shared vision. Moreover, we encourage the countries of the region to promote ways to facilitate the resumption of dialogue among all sides and to constructively engage with international partners to that end.

Greece will remain committed to the goal of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace for the Middle East. We must re-energize the peace process as soon as possible. If we want peace to prevail, we must look to the future without recriminations or arbitrary actions, which only take us backwards without hope.

Mrs. Taj (United Republic of Tanzania): We join in thanking the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Gambari, for his briefing on the situation in Palestine. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670).

We welcome the fact that Lebanon has moved troops across the Litani river to the south and that Israel has begun the gradual withdrawal of its forces. We believe that the rapid deployment of a strengthened United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) will assist in hastening the Israeli withdrawal. We further welcome the announcement by the Lebanese Defence Minister discouraging the firing of rockets at Israel. We join the Secretary-General in warning against such actions and in urging both parties to display responsibility in implementing resolution 1701 (2006), including the utmost respect for the arms embargo.

We note that Hizbollah has supported the resolution and has brought hostilities to an end. Notwithstanding the unfortunate incidents over the weekend, we hope that the ceasefire agreement can be translated into peace on the ground. It is thus imperative to ensure that the ceasefire continues to hold and that its implementation is verified. We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to dispatch a high-level mission to talk to the parties involved so as to secure full implementation of the resolution. We look forward to a report from that team after the completion of their mission.

We are encouraged by the positive response made by countries willing to contribute to a reinforced UNIFIL by providing both troops and equipment to make it more robust and give it a multilateral character. Indeed, we expect its rapid deployment in southern Lebanon, following clarification of the remaining sensitive issues pertaining to the concept of operations, the rules of engagement and the specific mandate of the new force. Tanzania will continue to render its full support to all efforts towards a lasting ceasefire.

In the humanitarian area, we commend the swift action taken to ensure that assistance reaches those in dire need as soon as possible. To enhance humanitarian operations and as a matter of urgency, the air and sea blockade over Lebanon must be lifted, so as to make available urgently needed items, in particular fuel. We appeal to all those helping returnees to increase their efforts, so as to prevent further human suffering. We have noted with satisfaction that their safety is being taken into account, in particular as regards the handling of unexploded ordnance and land mines.

With regard to the question of Palestine, we are very concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation there and the continued suffering of the Palestinian people, as described by the Under-Secretary-General. Constructive measures must be deployed to resolve the unrest in Gaza. A number of United Nations resolutions and other agreements provide a basis for a just and viable solution to the Middle East conflict, including the question of Palestine. As a long-term strategy, those resolutions should be revisited and implemented, which should include the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territory. The resumption of negotiations based on the Quartet's Road Map is key to a lasting solution.

In the short and immediate term, Hamas and Hizbollah should free the captured Israeli soldiers. For its part, Israel must settle the problem of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in its jails. Israel needs partners, rather than adversaries, to resolve the Middle East conflict. However slow and rocky the road may be, in the end diplomacy is a wiser and cheaper choice than war. The one-month confrontation between Israel and Hizbollah, which has resulted in enormous destruction and loss of life, has proven that point beyond any doubt.

Mr. Perevra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the valuable briefing given by Under-Secretary-General Gambari. Peru is pleased that resolution 1701 (2006), which the Security Council adopted 10 days ago, has been accepted by the Governments of Israel and Lebanon. We trust that the cessation of hostilities will serve as the beginning of the end of the violence that has caused so much death and destruction.

Violations of the cessation of hostilities, such as those described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2006/670) and the ones committed by Israeli forces on the night of Friday, 18 August, point to the extreme fragility of the situation and to the danger of further crisis. In that connection, we once again reiterate our call on the parties to fully comply with the cessation of hostilities.

Strengthening the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is a fundamental element of implementing resolution 1701 (2006). That should take place as quickly as possible, in order that UNIFIL can deploy and fully carry out the mandate entrusted to it and work jointly with the Lebanese army. In that regard, my delegation would like to highlight the work done by the Secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to promote the strengthening the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and to do so quickly as possible. We hope that the deployment of forces will take place in accordance with the three phases that have been envisaged.

Without disparaging those efforts, the current situation has once again made it possible to realize how important it is for the United Nations to have reserve forces at its disposal. Peru has repeatedly voiced its support for endowing the Organization with the necessary capacity to respond through forces with a pre-established mandate that have been voluntarily and unconditionally made available to the United Nations by States that agree with the need for them. In other words, the Organization should be able to rely on adequately prepared units that can be deployed immediately.

It is also important that the Governments of Lebanon and Israel consider, as soon as possible, the principles and elements for a definitive solution included in resolution 1701 (2006). In that connection, we are pleased to note that the Secretary-General's envoys Vijay Nambiar and Terje Roed-Larsen are in the region and have initiated contacts at the highest level. We look forward to their impressions upon their

return, as well as to the proposals to be made by the Secretary-General to implement the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), especially as regards disarming Hizbollah and irregular forces that do not recognize the authority of the Lebanese Government and as regards the demarcation of Lebanon's international borders, including the Shebaa farmlands.

The humanitarian situation continues to require great attention. We would like to underscore the efforts made by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies and organizations, which are continuing to do everything they can to bring aid to needy people as soon as possible. The strategy they have adopted towards their work and the basic principles on which they are focusing in these circumstances merit our gratitude and should be resolutely supported.

In that regard, we would like to recall what has been said by Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Margareta Wahlström, namely, that overcoming the humanitarian crisis not only depends upon assistance, but in particular upon the resumption of the economic and productive activities interrupted in Lebanon. That aspect should always be taken into account in the rebuilding effort.

In conclusion, with regard to the situation in Palestine, Peru once again deplores all acts of violence and kidnapping and the loss of human lives. We also deplore the critical situation in which the population of Palestine has to live. In that regard, it must be recalled that the Government of the Palestinian Authority has yet to meet the requirements put forward by the Quartet. A negotiated solution for the peaceful coexistence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living within secure and internationally recognized borders will remain elusive if one of the parties does not recognize the other's right to exist.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing.

Before I begin, we would like to align ourselves with the statement that will be delivered shortly on behalf of the European Union by the representative of Finland.

Slovakia has followed with great concern the recent developments in the escalation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah, which has led to great suffering for innocent people in both Lebanon and Israel. We have underlined on several occasions that the crisis can be solved only through political and diplomatic means. We therefore welcome the cessation of hostilities and violence and the return to political and diplomatic means to resolve the crisis, although the recent violent incidents of last week have shown that the situation is still very fragile. In that regard, we would like to underline that any violations of resolution 1701 (2006) will aggravate the volatile atmosphere. We therefore call upon all parties to fully respect the resolution, exercise maximum restraint and avoid any actions that could lead to misinterpretation.

It is also important that all parties concerned act in good faith, in the spirit of resolution 1701 (2006), thus allowing the international community to assist with the rapid deployment and reinforcement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in order to achieve a long-term resolution of the crisis. We share the concern of the Secretary-General that an escalation of the recent crisis and violence could have dire consequences not only for the countries involved but also for regional and global security.

We have repeatedly condemned terrorist actions and provocations by Hizbollah, which have led to the current crisis. In that regard, we would like to reiterate our firm belief that there can be no military solution to the Middle East conflict, the only way to achieve a comprehensive and lasting settlement is through peaceful negotiations and full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions and of the principles defined by the Quartet in the road map.

While we recognize the right of Israel to self-defence against terrorism and its perpetrators, we would like to underscore that it is important to exercise that right with utmost caution and restraint and to do everything possible to avoid the loss of innocent lives, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and increased suffering by the civilian population. In that regard, we are particularly concerned at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and the exodus of Lebanese people, caused by Israel's military action.

We highly appreciate the work of UNIFIL, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations agencies, which strive, often under very difficult and dangerous circumstances, to help

alleviate the human suffering of the increasing number of internally displaced persons and refugees.

We support the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. We believe that these can best be achieved through the full implementation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006). We are convinced that it now crucial to develop a plan for the full implementation of those two resolutions, and especially for helping the Government of Lebanon to assume full control over the whole territory of the country and to disarm all militias, which in our opinion is key to achieving a lasting and sustainable solution and is an important precondition for the stabilization and continuation of democratic processes in Lebanon. It is also very important to take appropriate measures against the illegal movement of arms and people across the borders of Lebanon and against hostile attacks against the territory of neighbouring States.

The international community should assist the Lebanese Government to achieve those goals. In that regard, we believe that it is necessary to take all steps to expeditiously enhance the strength and mandate of UNIFIL so that it can cope effectively with the tasks envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006).

Last but not least, as is also reflected in resolution 1701 (2006), we should not forget about the need to address urgently the causes that have given rise to the current crisis, including through the unconditional release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and, mindful of the sensitivity of the issue of prisoners, by encouraging efforts aimed at urgently settling the issue of the Lebanese citizens detained in Israel.

We would like to underscore that the restoration of calm in Lebanon is also an important step towards revitalizing the peace process in the Middle East region as a whole. In that regard, we are concerned at the deteriorating situation between Israel and the Palestinians and at the increasing number of civilian casualties on both sides as a result of hostilities and terrorist actions. We think that the Palestinian Government led by Hamas has missed an important opportunity to advance the peace process through its continued refusal to accept three principles defined by the Quartet as a precondition for becoming a reliable partner in the peace talks. We hope that President Abbas will be successful in his efforts to create appropriate support among the Palestinian people for the objectives of the road map. We think that the international community should provide him with its full support in that endeavour, including by addressing urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population through the Temporary International Mechanism administered by the European Union.

In that context, we urge Israel to resume the transfer of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues. Israel should also release the Palestinian officials and should refrain from a disproportionate and excessive use of force. At the same time, we recognize the right to fight terrorism and organized crime.

Finally, we take this opportunity to reaffirm our full support for a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict based on all relevant Security Council resolutions, and negotiations leading to implementation of the vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Slovakia, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to do its utmost to contribute constructively to a diplomatic solution to the ongoing tragic conflict in the region of the Middle East.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the great efforts he is making to contain the very grave situation in the Middle East, in the context of the fragile ceasefire in Lebanon provided by resolution 1701 (2006) on the one hand, and of the continuous escalation of military operations in Palestine and their serious repercussions for international peace and security on the other. I wish also to thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his important briefing on the events that have been unfolding in the region.

The other day, we reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670) and warned against the danger of sliding once more into war less than nine days after the ceasefire went into effect. Recent Israeli breaches of the ceasefire, which began with the military land operation last Saturday, and the continuous Israeli air force sorties over Lebanese territory are putting the will and credibility of the international community to the test. Such operations have been occurring intermittently since last Saturday.

These developments overshadow the encouraging signs that followed the beginning of compliance with

the cessation of hostilities. It saddens us that these violations are taking place as the international community is making a concerted effort to ensure a lasting cessation of hostilities, to provide humanitarian assistance to the targeted population and to returnees, and to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed by this asymmetrical war. In that regard, we cannot fail to state that the ongoing air and sea blockade imposed by Israel against Lebanon impedes efforts by humanitarian agencies to deliver supplies to those who are sorely in need of them. In that light, we call upon the Security Council to assume its responsibility by obliging Israel to immediately lift the blockade imposed against Lebanon. We also call for reinforcement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) by increasing its numbers and equipment to enable it to play the role assigned to it, because this is a vital element in the process of implementing resolution 1701 (2006).

While we applaud Lebanon's commitment to begin the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) by deploying its armed forces in the south, we are gravely concerned at Israel's deliberate violation of the provisions of the resolution. This obstructs the international community's efforts to establish regional peace and security and to rebuild Lebanon. In spite of that, we still believe in the Security Council's ability to preserve the delicate relative calm and to play an effective and essential role. We will work with all peace-loving States to continue to address this issue, in pursuit of security and stability in Lebanon and throughout the region.

As we seek a permanent solution to the situation in Lebanon, we must not lose sight of the events taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories — the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East — including the escalation of military operations and the detention and kidnapping campaigns, whose targets have included members of the Government and of the legislature who were elected by the Palestinian people. This is a blatant violation of international law, agreements between the two sides and other instruments and norms, and it shows disregard for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

It has repeatedly been made clear that the only way to put an end to violence in the Middle East region is through finding a permanent, comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine. The failure to deal objectively and effectively with this crisis and its root causes has led to a great many disturbances and tension in the region, which manifested themselves in the events in Lebanon and those that we are witnessing today in Gaza.

Believing in peace as the sole option, the Arab States intend to resubmit the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Security Council next September. It is our hope that this will lead to finding a permanent, comprehensive solution on all tracks, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, which affirm that the only solution that can end the vicious circle of violence and counter-violence is that of ending Israel's occupation of the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

Mr. Gayama (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I am grateful to you for giving the Council once again an opportunity to examine the situation in the Middle East, 11 days after the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006).

A review of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) for the period 11 to 17 August 2006 (S/2006/670) shows genuine cause for hope, overshadowed, unfortunately, by recent developments in the field — notably, serious violations of the cessation of hostilities that was decided on 14 August.

While thanking Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari for his report on the prevailing situation in the field, we cannot fail to consider the magnitude of the tasks that remain to be undertaken, not only by the actors but also by the international community.

As everyone knows, the delicate balance achieved in resolution 1701 (2006) is fragile. The implementation of this important document requires the full cooperation of all parties if the elements are to be applied in order to establish a new type of relationship between Israel and its neighbours, one based on mutual respect, integrity and the sovereignty of each.

We condemn any violation of the cessation of hostilities, from any quarter, because the logic of force is not only contrary to the principles of international law, but also, more to the point, it has revealed its limitations. Whether we consider military activities attributed to Hizbollah — which have reached a critical point likely to drag the Lebanese State into the maelstrom of an undeclared war with the Israeli State

and as an indirect consequence set the entire region on fire through a build up of alliances that could follow — or whether we consider the Israeli tendency to mistake effects for causes in a war already rooted in Palestinian territory, the solution cannot be found in the logic of confrontation and exclusion.

The cycle of violence has reached a critical threshold with, on the one hand, the sophistication of the arms used by the militias — which not only reduces the chances of the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) but also makes Israeli territory far more vulnerable than before — and, on the other hand, the risky strategy of targeted assassinations and the kidnapping of high officials in the Palestinian Government, with the recent cases of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of the Legislative Council. Paradoxically, that reminds us of the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, an operation that we condemned at the time while asking that the victims be released.

In our view, the systematic weakening of the Palestinian Authority does not in any way serve the objectives of the peace and stability of the region. More than ever, the prerogatives of the Palestinian Authority need to be restored so that it can play the role we expect in the process of implementing the road map, particularly taking into account the principle of land for peace, with the resolute support of the Quartet, the cooperation of regional organizations such as the League of Arab States, and the full engagement of the United Nations.

Certainly the surprise attack on 19 August by an Israeli commando against Hizbollah positions in the Bekaa valley — apparently to prevent the resupply of weapons — shows, if it was necessary, both the precariousness of the situation and how urgent it is to deploy a strengthened United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). It also points to the need to assist the Lebanese army in order to facilitate its deployment in the south and in all sectors from which Israeli forces have withdrawn or are in the process of withdrawing. The successful deployment of the Lebanese army is one of the keys to stabilization of the situation at the Israeli-Lebanese border, one of the most sensitive theatres of operation of the Middle East. Thus, we cannot but encourage the effective deployment, in keeping with the commitments undertaken by all parties.

What is more, the fragility of the situation and the risk of things getting out of control, with incalculable consequences, necessitate the rapid deployment of a strengthened UNIFIL. It must have a clearly defined mandate so that troop-contributing countries will be able to make the necessary arrangements in full knowledge of the facts.

In a context of generalized precariousness, such as that we deplore today, the efforts carried out by the humanitarian workers to assist the wounded populations and to restore the destroyed Lebanese infrastructure deserve our recognition and our support. This is an occasion to express thanks for all forms of aid already granted or pledged by the partners of Lebanon.

As regards Africa, we have always expressed our active sympathy for many Lebanese families, who have always been welcome and have found hospitality on our continent, allowing many to recover, socially and economically, from the traumas they endured.

The fragile situation leads us to echo the Secretary-General's appeal for all parties scrupulously to respect the cessation of hostilities and for a durable ceasefire to finally be negotiated and established. We also appeal to countries having an influence on the actors in the conflict to energetically exercise that influence in order to consolidate the process under way and promote a lasting peace between Israel, its Arab neighbours and all the peoples in the region.

The limits of force have been sufficiently demonstrated so that henceforth the parties can show more interest in the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and in initiating on a definitive settlement of the Middle East crisis on the basis of the relevant proposals already made. The ultimate objective would be the consolidation of the national institutions of the Palestinian people living in harmony with the Israeli people.

The Security Council should grasp this opportunity to accelerate the march of history in that part of the world. That is how it can credibly endorse the true aspirations of all for durable peace and security.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

At the outset, let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari for his briefing.

effects on regional peace and security. It has been generally acknowledged that the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East problem. Admittedly, it is not easy to resolve a conflict which is not only a clash over territory, but also a clash of rights and memory, a struggle between nationalist mythologies. The Middle East cannot be allowed to continue to be a cemetery of missed opportunities.

That the Palestinian question remains unresolved more than half a century after the original United Nations partition resolution is an indictment of the international community. The Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should live up to its role and use its creative energies for a comprehensive and fair solution to this conflict. Otherwise, peace and security will continue to be elusive in the Middle East.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): At the outset, Sir, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption by the brotherly country of Ghana of the presidency of the Security Council this month. We are certain that, under your able leadership, the Council will spare no effort in addressing the many critical issues that are before it at this time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the delegation and the Permanent Representative of France for their wise and capable leadership of the Council last month, during which the Council repeatedly convened and held consultations to address the dangerous crisis prevailing in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the situation in Lebanon.

Today, with a fragile ceasefire in place and with United Nations Member States assembling a force under the supervision of the Security Council for the purpose of bringing security and stability to southern Lebanon, we are witnessing the Council — despite a month's delay — carrying out its Charter responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security by taking these immediate, necessary and concrete measures.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari for his briefing.

In this regard, I would be remiss if I did not express the continuing hopes and appeals of the Palestinian people and their leadership that one day soon the Council will also act in a concerted and concrete manner to uphold its responsibilities towards the question of Palestine by taking the measures necessary to bring an end to the grievous violations and breaches of international law, including international humanitarian law, that continue to be committed by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

The Council has the requisite authority to act, and it is its fundamental duty to act appropriately to address those crises and issues that pose a threat to international peace and security and to exert every effort in that regard for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The situation of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, should be no exception. Indeed, there is no doubt that the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which has been the question of Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has been the source of almost every threat to peace and security in the Middle East for decades now; the loss and suffering continue to mount to this day. We thus reiterate our firm belief that the Council will ultimately play its rightful role and uphold its resolutions vis-à-vis the question of Palestine, leading towards the ultimate resolution of this prolonged and tragic conflict and of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.

In this regard, I wish to highlight the fact that the Arab Foreign Ministers, in their last three meetings, in Cairo, Beirut and Cairo, respectively, determined, in the light of the recent negative developments and the grave deterioration in the region, to work seriously towards bringing the issue of the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, back to the Security Council. Members will recall that during the ministerial meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Lebanon (S/PV.5511), the Foreign Minister of Qatar officially announced that the Arab countries would request a high-level meeting of the Security Council in September to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, with a view to moving in a practical way towards the implementation of the Council's relevant resolutions designed to resolve this

conflict through the achievement of a final, just and comprehensive peace settlement.

At this time, the Arab countries, via the League of Arab States, are in the midst of carrying out the necessary consultations and groundwork aimed at bolstering the potential for the success of this intended exercise, and we are hopeful that there will be wide support on the part of the international community in this important endeavour.

The decision to return to the Security Council — despite the Council's repeated inability to take the necessary actions to address the situation in the Middle East, particularly in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and its failure to uphold its numerous resolutions in this regard — has been taken on the basis of a belief in the responsibilities and the rightful role of the Council in international relations with regard to peace and security and the upholding of international law.

Moreover, it is clear that the peace process in which we have been engaged for 15 years now, beginning with the Madrid Conference in 1991, has not fulfilled its stated goals, as it has been repeatedly hampered by delays, stalemates, gross violations, cycles of violence and major crises. Most regrettably, this peace process, on its various tracks, has not brought an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory or of the Syrian Golan or of parts of southern Lebanon. Our part of the world continues to suffer violence, loss and despair as a result of this continuing military occupation and a never-ending series of violations of international law, including military aggression and attacks.

For Palestine, instead of the dramatic improvement anticipated in the situation on the ground and in the lives of the Palestinian people, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has steadily and gravely deteriorated during those years in all aspects — political, security, economic, social and humanitarian. Israel, the occupying Power, has continued — even during the most productive years of the peace process — its fervent, unlawful campaign of settler colonialism in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in particular in East Jerusalem, confiscating more and more Palestinian land, building and expanding more settlements, and more than doubling the number of its settlers in the territory.

In addition, Israel has now nearly completed the construction of a wall it has been building on confiscated land in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, that is severing the territory into several isolated and walled enclaves and cantons, destroying numerous communities in their entirety, destroying the livelihood of thousands of Palestinians and displacing thousands more, and further entrenching Israel's illegal settlements. The wall, along with the settlements and Israel's hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks, is destroying the contiguity and territorial integrity of the Palestinian territory, isolating occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the territory, devastating the Palestinian economy, destroying the very fabric of Palestinian society and taking us further away from the possibility of actually achieving the two-State solution.

In addition, the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation continues to suffer declining economic and social conditions as a result of Israel's ongoing military campaign of aggression, as glaringly witnessed in recent months, with its lethal and violent assaults against the besieged population in the Gaza Strip. That military campaign has involved, inter alia, the occupying Power's deliberate use of excessive force, resulting in the killing or injury of hundreds of Palestinian civilians, including women and children; the terrorizing of the population; the continuation of extrajudicial killings; the vast and wanton destruction of vital infrastructure, properties and institutions of the Palestinian Authority; the detention and imprisonment of hundreds of Palestinian civilians — now totalling more than 9,000 prisoners in Israeli jails; and the collective punishment of the entire population.

All of this, in addition to the financial crisis imposed on the Palestinian Authority in recent months following the January 2006 elections, has caused a dramatic decline in economic and social conditions and has resulted in a grave humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory that continues to this day.

Since I addressed the Council on 21 July, Palestine has sent eight letters to the President of the Security Council detailing some of the grave breaches committed by the aforementioned occupying Power. Those letters also listed the names of the Palestinians killed since the last time we met here in the Council. The numbers are shocking. More than 105 people have been killed, including 22 children, and over 600 have been injured, many critically. In one single day during

that period, the Israeli occupying forces killed more than 20 Palestinians, including two infants, a 4-year-old baby girl and a 9-year-old girl, and injured more than 80 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

On another front, more than 3,400 Palestinians are now internally displaced and have sought shelter in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) installations, as a result of the ongoing Israeli military aggression in the Gaza Strip. This is due mainly to the fact that hundreds of families living in neighbourhoods in Gaza were forced to flee their homes in terror after receiving threatening telephone calls from the Israeli occupying forces telling them they had only a short time to abandon their homes. There is no doubt that this new tactic of psychological warfare has caused panic and fear to spread among the Palestinian civilian population, which already suffers from severe psychological trauma as a result of Israel's brutal occupation.

To highlight just one tragic incident, a 3-day-old infant girl, Shahd Al-Eid, fell from her mother's arms as the latter was fleeing, seeking refuge from a "pre-warned" Israeli missile attack. The infant was later pronounced dead as a result of internal bleeding and bruises.

Indeed, it is a situation that continues to deteriorate as a result of the occupying Power's unlawful policies and practices, as we are witnessing in its daily raids and deadly attacks in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in Gaza; the continued arrest and detention of Palestinians, including numerous elected officials of the Palestinian Authority; the continued closures and the imposition of severe restrictions on freedom of movement, and the continued destruction of property.

In that regard, it is important to note that the elements of the recently vetoed draft resolution concerning the situation in Gaza continue to be relevant, for there has been no cessation of hostilities, no withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces to their original positions outside Gaza, no release of detained elected officials, and no repair of the vital infrastructure destroyed by the occupying Power — all necessary elements for paving the way for a resumption of negotiations.

Overall, the prevailing situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of Israel's illegal practices and measures, has compounded not only the suffering and misery of the Palestinian people but also their frustration, desperation and anger, intensifying appeals by the Palestinian people and by the Arab world as a whole that real and immediate action to be taken to address this ongoing injustice, which has continued for far too long. Thus the decision by the Arab countries, at this very critical juncture in the Middle East, to return to the Security Council seeking redress is based on the consensus Arab position that the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the question of Palestine, should revert to the Security Council and that the Council should exercise its responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and assist the parties to reach a just and comprehensive solution.

In this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and the terms of reference of the peace process, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. We therefore reaffirm once again our strong hope that very soon the Council will meet at a high level to undertake serious and concrete actions towards the long-desired achievement of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole and, thus, the achievement of peace, security, coexistence and prosperity for all the peoples of the Middle East region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I have listened very carefully to my Palestinian colleague. Strangely, some key words were ominously missing from his statement. There was no mention of Hamas, terror, Qassam rockets or the abduction of Corporal Gilad Shalit. I truly believe that, when discussing the question of Palestine, the members of the Council deserve better.

While we are greatly concerned about the situation in Palestine, we feel it would be wrong to divert attention from what the Council has so intensely been engaged in over the past month, namely, the situation in Lebanon and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). This is our foremost responsibility and we must commit all our efforts to making it happen. However, as a lot has been said in the Council about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, I

would like to inform the Council that we, too, are very conscious of the humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip. I received word only this morning that 3,772 truckloads of food, medical equipment and other supplies have already entered Gaza in the past two months. 664 empty trucks have left Gaza with the intent of returning full with new supplies. All this has been done in close cooperation with the United Nations and with the international community's representatives dealing with these humanitarian issues.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari for his briefing. The reason we are here today, however, goes back many years — far beyond this report. Six years ago, Israel withdrew all its presence from southern Lebanon, fulfilling its obligations to the international community as outlined in resolution 425 (1978). Six years ago was the time for action, when everything we have discussed today and in the past month could have been avoided.

There were other opportunities along the way. Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006) also outlined the plan for a new reality in Lebanon, which was clear in its call for Lebanon to exercise its control over all its territory and govern just as would be expected of any other responsible State. The unconditional implementation of those resolutions could have prevented the events of the past month. But the willingness to implement the resolutions was wanting. As a result, Lebanon found itself hijacked by evil and occupied by terror.

All the while, Israel found itself in an intolerable situation. Just over its northern border with Lebanon a state within a State continued to grow, unchecked by the Lebanese Government. And so Hizbollah grew monstrously, spreading its claws throughout Lebanon and amassing large caches of weapons, thanks to the backing of neighbouring Syria and Iran, its evil sponsors.

On 12 July 2006, Hizbollah blatantly violated the Blue Line and crossed into Israel. In the process, it killed eight Israeli soldiers and abducted two others. Israel, like any other State, has the right and duty to defend its citizens from Hizbollah's attacks — and it did so. Over the past month, the peoples of Israel and Lebanon have had to pay a heavy price.

Resolution 1701 (2006) is an opportunity — perhaps the last opportunity — to rectify the mistakes of the past and usher in a new reality. Resolution 1701 (2006) is our best chance for reversing the corrosive decay of Lebanon and all that came with it — Hizbollah, a state within a State, and its masters, Syria and Iran, whose President denies the Holocaust while preparing the next one and openly calls for the destruction of Israel and for wiping it off the map, while acquiring the capabilities to do so.

We trust in resolution 1701 (2006) to create a new Lebanon free of such terrorizing occupiers. But there are obstacles to implementing the resolution, and those issues raise serious concerns. We must join forces in order to overcome them.

Allow me, Mr. President, to highlight some important points from resolution 1701 (2006). The first is the crucial issue of the abducted soldiers — Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. We are facing here a grave humanitarian issue. Each day that passes without their release is crucial. Israel views the immediate and unconditional release of those soldiers as the primary backdrop to the creation of a new reality on the ground. Each one of you, by raising your hand, has pledged to work for their release. We urge you to fulfil that responsibility.

The second point is the strength and composition of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). A clear and unequivocal mandate needs to be outlined for UNIFIL — one that its donor countries can achieve. With a clear and effective mandate, countries contributing to the robust UNIFIL force can commit wholeheartedly and without hesitation.

UNIFIL must have not just the manpower but also the willpower to help the Lebanese Government reach this new reality. At the moment, UNIFIL's strength is uncertain. A weak UNIFIL does not fulfil the interests of Lebanon or the region, and it writes Hizbollah a blank cheque to continue to do as it pleases.

UNIFIL's manpower should reach 15,000 troops, so that its presence can be felt in the areas deployed. It must be a robust force, comprising quality, professional and well-trained troops. UNIFIL must also be geographically distributed. At the 15,000-troop mark, it should be able to spread itself across southern Lebanon, in parallel with the Lebanese army. Beginning south of the Litani River, UNIFIL must be seen and felt.

The Lebanese army's deployment in the south is a welcome contribution. Since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), we have witnessed encouraging meetings between Lebanese commanders and the Israel Defense Forces. But we have also seen Hizbollah terrorists disappearing into the shadows, with no definitive action taken to prevent their re-emergence.

That brings me to the third concern. The rearming of Hizbollah is a blatant violation of the ceasefire. The embargo is the cardinal instrument of resolution 1701 (2006). There is no doubt that Syria and Iran wish to rearm Hizbollah and prevent the emergence of a new Lebanon. Giving them the opportunity to rearm Hizbollah will have catastrophic ramifications for the region and the world. If we cannot enforce an embargo, we send a message to the terrorists and their State backers that we will permit them to continue their ways of terror.

In order to prevent that, mechanisms are needed to surveyist the Syrian-Lebanese border and to monitor the Lebanese seaports and airports. UNIFIL needs to be there, but a policy that addresses how States can enforce the embargo also needs to be articulated. In the absence of enforcement powers, Hizbollah, Iran and Syria will laughingly continue to ignore the embargo, as they are at this very moment.

An embargo does not mean merely preventing arms from crossing the border; it also means putting an end to Syria and Iran's manipulation of Lebanon and its people. During the recent fighting, Israel captured a 22-year-old Hizbollah terrorist by the name of Hussein Ali Suleiman, who admitted to having undergone extensive training in Iran, along with many other Hizbollah terrorists. Other Hizbollah terrorists in Israeli custody have disclosed that Iranian Revolutionary Guards visited their fortified positions along the Israeli border.

If Lebanon asks the Security Council for help, the Council must be willing and able to step forward and give Lebanon a hand. The task of creating a new reality in Lebanon is too important to be the sole work of one State. And, as history has shown us, neglecting to implement the resolutions adopted by the Council comes at all too high a price.

The Middle East is a region caught between rifts of extremism, where radicals engage in fierce battles that have no rules of play. Israel finds itself lodged between those currents, trying to navigate a peaceful solution to the turmoil and allow civilization to grow and prosper as it should.

While our attention has largely been focused on the north, on Lebanon, Israel has also been attacked from the south — by Hamas, operating in Gaza. Regrettably, the forces of extremism have taken hold there as well, and Gaza today is a haven for terrorists and their unsanctioned activities. Indeed, if unchecked, it may be a preview to the next Lebanon.

Hamas has also abducted an Israeli soldier. It has been two months since Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by terrorists who crossed from Gaza into Israel. Along with his abduction, terrorism has continued, including the launching of Qassam rockets at southern Israeli communities. These rocket attacks impose an intolerable situation upon Israel and place its citizens in constant danger.

But there is a way to a new Palestinian reality as well. It begins with the immediate and unconditional release of Gilad Shalit. It begins with a halt to the Qassam rockets and terror attacks. It begins with an end to all forms of terror and with the uprooting of terrorists who wilfully endanger the region.

Israel has been blanketed from north to south by these forces of extremism, by Hamas, Hizbollah, Syria and Iran — the quartet of terror — whose evil knows no bounds. This quartet of terror must be defeated. It is a threat not just to Israel, but to the entire world and to civilization as we know it. The implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) is a first step towards defeating that threat.

The outcome of the next few weeks and the months ahead is ours collectively to decide. The Security Council, representing the international community, possesses that power. Where will we go from here? Will we succeed in implementing these resolutions? Will we succeed in implementing them quickly? Will we work together as partners to enforce an embargo and put an end to the poisonous Syrian and Iranian influence in the region?

These are the questions with which we are being tested. Resolution 1701 (2006) is, indeed, a test: a test for Lebanon, a test for the Security Council, a test for the international community. If we do not pass this test, we will have lost our chance — perhaps our last chance — to free Lebanon from the forces of terror and bring about a new reality.

We can pass this test, but it cannot be done by any one of us alone. We must partner together and become a unified force and a unified voice on terrorism, on extremism and on the forces that threaten the way we live. We must grasp this opportunity.

Resolution 1701 (2006) can be our success story. It can be the story we tell to our children and grandchildren when we recount this region's complex history. It can be the story we take pride in as the defining moment when we rose to the occasion and did not let the terrorists seize power over us. Resolution 1701 (2006) is that story. But it remains the duty of the international community and of the Security Council to ensure that it comes true.

The President: I now call on the representative of Norway.

Mr. Brenik (Norway): Norway welcomes and strongly supports resolution 1701 (2006). We strongly encourage the parties to do their utmost to maintain the cessation of hostilities and transform it into a lasting ceasefire. We support the Secretary-General in his view that the recent Israeli military operation in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon is in violation of the cessation of hostilities, and we urge all parties to refrain from further actions that undermine resolution 1701 (2006).

Our main priority must be to achieve a long-term solution based on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Norway fully supports the Secretary-General in his efforts to find ways to implement the resolution. The international community must follow up with political support and with economic and humanitarian contributions.

Norway welcomes the positive steps taken on the ground, including the deployment of the Lebanese army to the south and the parties' coordination with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces.

While the parties bear the main responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the resolution, we call on all States in the region to contribute constructively towards that goal. The rapid deployment of a reinforced UNIFIL is vital to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Norwegian Government is considering a contribution to the Force, provided that the conditions necessary to ensure success — in particular satisfactory rules of engagement — are in place.

The humanitarian needs are enormous and are a cause of great concern to Norway. It is imperative that the Lebanese Government and the international donor community identify the humanitarian needs in Lebanon. As a contribution to that effort, Sweden, Spain and Norway have issued invitations to a conference on relief and early recovery to be held in Stockholm on 31 August. Let me add that Norway has already allocated $22 million for humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people, with an additional $1.6 million to remove oil spills on the coast of Lebanon, and stands ready to contribute to long-term reconstruction efforts in Lebanon.

We remain deeply concerned about the continued deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. The Israeli regime of closures is preventing vital goods from entering Gaza and is hurting the entire Palestinian population. Norway strongly urges all parties to return to the peace process on the basis of the Road Map.

The President: I now call on the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to thank your predecessor, the representative of France. Through you, I also wish to express our great appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to address the Lebanese crisis. In addition, I should like to thank Mr. Gambari for his briefing today.

I am addressing the Security Council more than 10 days after its adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), a resolution that the Council sought with a view to achieving a cessation of hostilities, not a ceasefire, a resolution that did not respond to all the requirements of the Lebanese Government, but nonetheless addressed Lebanese issues and concerns with great seriousness; a resolution that emphasized Israeli withdrawal and international commitment to Lebanese sovereignty, support for Lebanon and respect for its national decisions.

We therefore accepted the resolution, in the hope that it would deter the Israeli war machine and bring an end to its aggression, which has lasted for 33 consecutive days. In that time, Israel has wreaked havoc, killed, displaced and destroyed. In 33 days, Israel has set Lebanon back 30 years, in fulfilment of a promise made by Israel's Minister for Defence. The

aggression has also had an enormous cost in terms of the thousands of persons killed and injured, the imposition of a land, sea and air blockade, the displacement of around 1 million people and the destruction of hundreds of bridges, vital institutions and infrastructure amounting to a loss of between $3 billion and $9 billion.

Despite all of that, the Government of Lebanon has shaken off the dust of war and agreed to the resolution, which called for a cessation of hostilities to which it has been committed since 14 August 2006. Our Government has continued to take a series of fundamental measures and decisions, including the Cabinet's 16 August decision to deploy the Lebanese army in southern Lebanon, with a mandate to maintain security in the area, defend our country's territory and secure the property of our citizens, while reaffirming full respect for the Blue Line and the implementation of all laws regarding any weapons outside the authority of the Lebanese State, in cooperation and coordination with international forces, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006).

My country, gravely wounded but determined to rise again to restore its sovereignty and security and the safety of its citizens, has committed itself, despite being the victim, to that international resolution and taken courageous and unprecedented measures to act upon that commitment. However, what has Israel, the executioner, done? How has it responded to those efforts? Today, more than 10 days after the cessation of hostilities was declared, we are once again here in the Council to inform its members that Israel is continuing its aggression and its daily violations of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 425 (1978). There were 82 violations of our airspace between 14 and 20 August. Moreover, Israel has maintained its presence in many border areas within Lebanese territory. It has set up checkpoints and has fired bursts of gun and sniper fire against civilians, to say nothing of the explosion of cluster bombs and landmines, which kill civilians, including women and children, and members of the Lebanese army. Such ordnance has been used and planted by Israel since the beginning of its aggression on 12 July — all on the pretext of self-defence and combating terrorism. I should therefore like to stress the following points.

Regardless of the justifications it puts forth, Israel's acts are offensive acts. Regardless of the pretexts offered, Israel's acts are acts of aggression. Regardless of the reasons and justifications, what Israel is doing contravenes international law. More than not enough, on 19 August Israel added to its violations with a land operation deep in Lebanon close to the city of Baalbek in eastern Lebanon, thereby subjecting this fragile calm to great instability and committing an act of aggression against the sovereignty of the Lebanese State. This has prompted the Secretary-General to express his deep concern for the fragile calm that has been achieved, and about the dangers that it might entail in terms of undermining the authority of the Lebanese Government.

In pursuing their efforts to block the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), Israeli officials have informed us of conditions and have vetoed the participation of a number of countries that have declared their readiness to contribute to an enhanced United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Israel has also very clearly procrastinated in committing itself to the three phases of withdrawal from Lebanon, namely, by increasing the number of phases to 16. Its Minister for Defence has also threatened us many times with a return to war.

All of that has led us to reiterate over and again that Lebanon, which believes in the principles of the United Nations and looks to the Organization as the basic framework for extricating itself from the current crisis, appeals to the Security Council to work diligently to bring about the following: the establishment and strengthening of a permanent ceasefire through a UNIFIL strengthened with additional international troops; and the immediate and unconditional lifting of the air, sea and land blockade imposed by Israel. The root causes of the crisis should be addressed, including by ending the occupation of the Shebaa farms, securing the release of all Lebanese prisoners in Israeli prisons and convincing Israel to turn over maps of the landmines it has planted on our territory. Finally, we appeal to the international community to continue its vital humanitarian assistance to the many Lebanese in need and to contribute effectively to the reconstruction of Lebanon, a country rich in its capabilities, unique in its diversity and distinguished by its democracy.

Wounded Lebanon today would like to salute the heroic struggle and steadfastness of the Palestinian people. We openly condemn the continuous acts of aggression committed by Israel against that people, including its kidnapping of Palestinian officials, its hindrance of everyday life, its settlements on

Palestinian territory and its construction of the barrier wall.

With all due respect, what is required today is Israel's full commitment to the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) and all other relevant international resolutions, so as to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Rosengren (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries, Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries, Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; and the European Free Trade Association country members of the European Economic Area, Iceland, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing on the situation in the Middle East. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2006/670) on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The European Union fully supports the Secretary-General in his efforts to find ways to implement that resolution.

It is now 11 days since the adoption of the resolution and eight days since the cessation of hostilities went into effect. The region has started the process of recovering from the violence of the past weeks. A number of encouraging steps have been taken. We welcome the quick decision of the Government of Lebanon to send Lebanese army forces to the south of the country and its rapid implementation, as well as the beginning of the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

The EU commends the constructive way the parties have been coordinating with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on the withdrawal of the IDF and the deployment of the Lebanese army. The incidents that have occurred, especially in recent days, demonstrate that the situation is very fragile. Therefore, we strongly encourage all parties to do their utmost to ensure that the cessation of hostilities is maintained and to transform it into a durable ceasefire.

The international community will have to play an important role in contributing to the stabilization of the situation on the ground. We know that we need to move swiftly to deploy the international force in southern Lebanon in order to support the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The new UNIFIL will be a challenging operation. It will have to be different from the old UNIFIL to undertake its tasks successfully. Many EU countries are willing to participate in this common effort to help bring about peace in the region. Some have already made their decision to send troops, while others are considering it.

It is also important that all States in the region play a constructive role in order, first, to contribute to a reduction of tensions and then to be able to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006).

The European Union welcomes the fact that the cessation of hostilities has greatly improved the frequency and quantity of humanitarian assistance. But much remains to be done, and the Secretary-General's report sets out the key priority areas for the humanitarian community during this immediate post-ceasefire phase. It is important that the sea and sea blockade by Israel be soon as possible to allow unimpeded access to Lebanon for humanitarian operations. There has been a large return of displaced people. In addition to the need for aid to meet basic needs of the people, such as water supply and temporary shelter, support is urgently needed in the disposal of unexploded ordnance and the cleaning up of oil spills.

The EU presidency Minister for Development, Paula Lehtomäki, and EU Commissioner Louis Michel were in the region last week in order to assess the situation from an EU point of view. The EU will continue to contribute to the humanitarian relief work. EU aid already committed amounts to €74 million. It is also clear that, when the early reconstruction work starts, the EU will play a role, in close cooperation with the Government of Lebanon and with other international partners. The Stockholm conference that will be hosted by Sweden on 31 August will provide an important forum in which to continue to discuss these pressing issues.

In addition to Lebanon, the situation in the Palestinian territories also remains a cause of great concern for the EU. The humanitarian situation has been deteriorating for a long time, civilian

infrastructure has been destroyed and civilian lives have been lost. These developments continue to pose the risk of further deterioration of the situation in the region. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority need to act to address this situation. The abducted Israeli soldier must be released quickly and unconditionally.

The parties need to return to the peace process on the basis of the road map. An unequivocal commitment by all parties to a viable, independent Palestinian State living side by side with Israel and its other neighbours is a key to stability and security in the whole region.

The EU is committed to promoting a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East in close cooperation with partners and the countries in the region. There is no military solution to any of the problems facing the people of the region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Council presidency for this month and by thanking you for convening this debate on an issue that is truly threatening international peace and security.

The war machine of the Israeli regime has continued to destroy the lives and livelihoods of the innocent Palestinian and other people in the region. Not only has that machine of horror and terror continued to perpetrate war crimes and crimes against humanity in Palestine, but it has also inflicted enormous suffering and pain on the whole civilian population in Lebanon for 34 continuous days and nights. The whole world witnessed the horror as the Israeli war machine was used by — and that is the United States — in their desire to create havoc throughout a whole country, despite the tragic human toll.

The unspeakable and brutal bombing campaign the Israeli regime, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2006/670) indicates, killed about 1,200 Lebanese and injured thousands more, the majority of whom were women and children. Indiscriminate and blanket air strikes aimed at collectively punishing the Lebanese people destroyed or damaged 77,000 apartments and 145 bridges, according to the same report.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also came to the opinion in its report to the Security Council on 18 August that enormous damage had been inflicted on the road and bridge networks, other essential infrastructure and residential housing, with some more in the south having been 60 per cent of their residential housing destroyed. She further referred to reports by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) indicating widespread contamination by unexploded artillery, airborne munitions and cluster munitions, including in residential areas and public buildings, causing many more civilian deaths among returnees and hindering the provision of humanitarian relief.

Indeed, the recent all-out war against Lebanon was a clear indication of a pre-existing and ill-intended plan by the Israeli regime, which had already secured the support of its ally — that is, the United States. In the past several weeks, more evidence has emerged supporting that assertion. *The Wall Street Journal* revealed in its issue of 19-20 August that "at least since 2004, the Israeli military had plans in place for possibly attacking Lebanon. It goes on, adding that the Israeli decision "transformed a border shoot-out into a war and virtually guaranteed it would become a crisis".

Nonetheless, once again the Israeli onslaught proved that it is impossible to intimidate the people in the region into submission or to quash their desire to live free from occupation and terror.

In fact, although the latest aggression was successful in laying waste to buildings and civilian infrastructures and in killing civilians, it obviously — as the whole world witnessed — brought about results that were opposite to those that the aggressors had sought. It strengthened the resolve of the people to resist aggression, occupation, intimidation and terror.

The cessation of hostilities, although belatedly offered some relief to the Lebanese civilians and the whole international community, which witnessed the power of Israeli State terrorism hovering over a defenceless country for 34 days. Here, I should put on record my Government's sense of profound frustration over the inaction and the handicap imposed on the Security Council for many weeks, preventing it from fulfilling its primary responsibility — inaction that allowed an entire population to suffer such terrible pain and loss and that proved very costly to the Council's credibility and integrity.

egregious crimes and State terrorism. A case in point is the latest failed terrorist commando raid by the Israeli regime in Lebanon. While its goal was in fact abduction, it was deceitfully portrayed as an effort to foil the transfer of arms to that country.

However, such allegations cannot and will not divert the attention of the international community from the root causes of all tensions in the Middle East, that is, occupation, State terrorism and the aggression perpetuated by the Israeli regime against the countries in the region. Indeed, those few who have tacitly or explicitly supported the crimes of the Israeli regime against the Palestinian and Lebanese people are clearly accomplices in those crimes and should be held accountable for that complicity.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Brazil, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking you for having convened this meeting on the Middle East at such a critical juncture for peace in the entire region. Let me also acknowledge the relentless efforts undertaken by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his colleagues in the Secretariat with a view to promoting peaceful solutions to the crisis in the region. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, for presenting us with an informative update on the situation in the Middle East.

The present crisis in the Middle East poses a renewed challenge to the Security Council as regards the effectiveness of its reaction, its methods of work and its transparency. Once again, the spiralling and unchecked use of force in the Middle East requires the urgent attention of the Security Council. Brazil welcomes the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon and calls upon all parties to abide by the obligations established in resolution 1701 (2006). The parties should refrain from any action that jeopardizes the fledgling truce. They must do their utmost to ensure that the cessation of hostilities holds and is further transformed into a durable ceasefire.

Brazil regrets that the prolonged inaction of the Council faced with a flagrant threat to international peace and security, allowed the conflict to drag on for 34 long days. We also deplore the fact that conflict operations in Lebanon were characterized by the rapidly increasing use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force, causing the death of many hundreds of innocent civilians, the unprecedented displacement of a large proportion of the population and severe damage to essential housing and infrastructure, in open violation of international humanitarian law.

The incident in Qana is deeply disturbing. The observation contained in the Secretary-General's letter that the incident reflects "a pattern of violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, committed during the course of the current hostilities" (*S/2006/626, p. 5*) is alarming and warrants further investigation into this matter. Our Government welcomes the setting up by the Human Rights Council of a fact-finding commission to investigate the human rights violations committed during the fighting.

At least seven Brazilian nationals, including three children, perished as a consequence of Israeli military incursions in southern Lebanon. The Brazilian Government launched an unprecedented operation to evacuate approximately 3,000 of our own nationals.

Since the very beginning of the conflict, President Lula da Silva has appealed for a ceasefire and underlined the hope for a negotiated process that could end the hostilities and help bring peace and understanding. President Lula interacted with the Secretary-General and with many other international leaders in order to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Minister for External Relations Celso Amorim visited Beirut on 15 August to consult with the Government, reiterate our commitment to supporting the Lebanese people and deliver a sizeable contribution in medical supplies to provide emergency treatment for thousands of people.

Brazil strongly supports the resolution 1701 (2006) framework for providing the assistance the Government of Lebanon will require to extend its sovereignty and authority throughout its territory, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and the Taif Agreements, including the calls for the dismantling and disarmament of all militias in the country. We appeal to the countries in a position to help reinforce the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to do so promptly.

Furthermore, we call for the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and the creation of conditions for achieving a durable solution for the crisis. Particular attention must be paid to the sensitive issue

of the large number of Lebanese prisoners detained in Israel.

Brazil calls upon the international community to continue to lend its support for prompt humanitarian action and for the rebuilding of Lebanon. We all expect that the donors conference to be held on 31 August in Stockholm will accelerate the humanitarian efforts to meet the immediate needs of the civilian population and to gradually phase in a response, coordinated by the Government of Lebanon, that is geared towards recovery and reconstruction.

Brazil does not condone the use of violence to obtain what can be achieved only through negotiation. Non-negotiated solutions do not bring about peace. As a country that firmly believes in dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts, we stress the need for the resumption of a political process involving all interested parties. Brazil is also convinced that stability ultimately rests on the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects.

The Lebanese crisis has made the current paralysis of the Middle East peace process even more visible. It has also highlighted the urgent need to address the underlying causes of the conflict.

As a main goal, the world community should strengthen efforts to create conditions for the resumption of the peace process in the region on all tracks. Within this framework, one of the urgent tasks is the normalization of the situation in the Palestinian territories and the resumption of dialogue between the Palestinian National Authority and Israel. In this connection, the Palestinian political leaders now detained in Israel should be promptly liberated.

Brazil welcomes the decision by the League of Arab States to request a high-level meeting of the Security Council in September, open to the participation of all interested delegations, to address the situation in the Middle East. Brazil stresses the need to put in motion a political process for the development of a strategy with a pertinent timeline to implement the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, as stated in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). Such strategy should also take into account the Quartet road map, the principle of land for peace derived from the Madrid Conference and the Beirut Arab League Summit decisions.

The international community should seize this opportunity to review the deadlocked Middle East peace process and put an end, once for all, to conflicts that have caused too much suffering and despair over many decades.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): My Government is pleased to see that after 34 days of violent conflict, there is now a ceasefire in Lebanon. As we saw this weekend, however, this ceasefire is fragile. Nonetheless, we are confident that the Governments of both Israel and Lebanon are committed to a true cessation of hostilities. The two Governments understand that both the Israeli and Lebanese people need security and stability above all.

The Government of Canada has already responded positively to the urgent appeal to support Lebanon. On 16 August, Canada announced the creation of a $25 million Lebanon relief fund to respond to humanitarian, early recovery, stabilization and reconstruction needs, in order to help people rebuild their lives. This new fund will build on Canada's previous allocation of $5.5 million to address immediate humanitarian needs. Canada has also actively supported humanitarian agencies to reach civilians in need, including the transport by air of humanitarian personnel and over 140 tons of relief items.

Canada stands behind the Lebanese Government. Reconstruction efforts must ultimately be led by the State — not Hizbullah.

All Member States share an obligation to ensure that resolution 1701 (2006) is respected, including agreements with both Governments on its implementation, and that a full arms embargo is enforced. We all also share a collective responsibility to see that obligations under international humanitarian law are respected by all.

The fundamental challenge ahead is to ensure that Hizbut`h does not regain and does not present an even greater threat to Israel in the future. This body unanimously agreed on a resolution that articulates the necessary elements for a lasting peace. At the centre of that is the disarmament of all armed groups in

Lebanon, including Hizbollah, so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State.

This is not the first time the Security Council has dealt with this issue, but it is Canada's hope that, with the unanimous passage of resolution 1701 (2006), it will be the last.

Canada welcomes the Lebanese Government's ordering the deployment of 15,000 soldiers to south Lebanon and its announcement that it will not tolerate other armed groups in its territory. When the Lebanese army, backed by the United Nations, becomes the sole visible armed force in south Lebanon, the positive impact on the region will be great.

Canada is disappointed that Iran and Syria, arms suppliers and financial backers of Hizbollah, have not yet accepted the terms of the resolution. They should not be allowed to spoil the peace.

The Lebanese Government must be strengthened so that it can fulfil its rightful role as the provider for and protector of its people. It is equally important for the Lebanese people to have confidence that their Government is capable of delivering on the key responsibilities of a sovereign State. Countries in the region should support the efforts of this nascent democracy to flourish, without having to compete against resources being sent to terrorist organizations. The international community needs to continue providing humanitarian and reconstruction relief.

(spoke in French)

Lebanon has been at the forefront of international attention, but Canada would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that real and lasting peace in the Middle East is inextricably linked to the search for a viable solution — that is, two States: Israel and Palestine.

Canada supports President Abbas and is following with interest his efforts to establish a broader unity Government. If Hamas is serious about helping the Palestinian people, it must immediately and unconditionally release the kidnapped Israeli soldier and it must commit to the Quartet principles of recognition of Israel, acceptance of international agreements and the renunciation of violence.

In conclusion, Canada is firmly committed to the provision of humanitarian assistance, stabilization, reconstruction and capacity-building in Lebanon, as well as in the West Bank and Gaza. We stand ready to continue to work constructively with other Member States and to try to address some of the key problems with a view to achieving peace and security in the region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Abdelsalam (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States. I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We thank you for having convened this important meeting. We would also like to commend your predecessor, the representative of France, for his efforts last month. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his comprehensive briefing.

Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing to defy the will of the international community. The most recent manifestation of that defiance was its attempt last week to insert soldiers deep within Lebanon in clear violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Furthermore, Israel is arrogantly and recklessly continuing its acts of aggression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. The number of victims is growing daily, as is the degree of material damage.

In an unprecedented and provocative challenge to law, legitimacy and legal norms, Israeli forces have abducted and detained dozens of democratically elected Palestinian officials, most recently the Palestinian Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of the Palestinian Legislative Council, who have now joined ministers and other representatives of the Palestinian people.

Israel's unprecedented violation of the principles of international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, its murder of unarmed civilians, its targeting of women and children, its deliberate destruction of Palestinian infrastructure and civilian Palestinian Authority institutions, its demolition of houses and its displacement of persons, all give the people of the world, who are observing these actions in shock and sadness, the impression that the Council is completely unable to perform its role of preserving international peace and security. That erodes confidence in the United Nations and can have dire

for hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. The world was rightly distressed by the large-scale violations of basic human rights and of international humanitarian law perpetrated by the aggressor, which did not hesitate to use destructive weapons, some of which are prohibited.

Neither could the world understand why it took so long for the Security Council to put an end to the tragedy, the destruction and the massacre of civilians. The rumblings that we are hearing suggest that, unfortunately, this is not yet over. It is certainly urgent that, in order to avert the risk of further violence, everything be done so that the necessary measures can be taken, including through the strengthening the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, within the framework of resolution 1701 (2006), in order to put an end to Israeli aggression and to restore peace to Lebanon.

If the situation in Lebanon is a real tragedy and a scandal in the eyes of the international community, what can be said of the situation prevailing in Palestine? What can be said of the suffering that the Palestinian people has been experiencing for more than 40 years? What can be said of the secret killings and the massive violations of human rights that the Israeli army is daily carrying out in the occupied Palestinian territories? What can be said about the deplorable living conditions of an entire people deprived of its fundamental rights?

My delegation firmly condemns those repeated ... and unjustified ... violations of human rights. It expresses its grave concern at the occupying Power's continued kidnappings of elected members of Palestinian institutions, most recently the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary-General of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and it demands the immediate, unconditional release of all those who have been kidnapped in defiance of international law and in the face of the protests of the international community.

The force, violence and terror being used against the Palestinian people will not resolve this conflict. They will not address security concerns and will not put an end to the determination of the Palestinian people to build a State of its own and to live in dignity, peace and security. These condemnable acts will only further exacerbate tension and provoke more violence.

It is time for these troubles to come to an end. It is time for the international community to intervene,

first and foremost to protect the Palestinian population from the ferocious occupation, from oppression and from the terror being imposed upon it, and then to bring about peace. Such peace was offered by the Arab Summit in 2000, but that offer was never taken up. It is time for the relevant resolutions of the Security Council to be respected, and for an end to bombings and war in the Middle East region, a region that has for so long sought renewed peace and prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Hussain (Pakistan): I must first of all apologize for the absence of Ambassador Akram, who is unable to deliver this statement owing to other engagements.

Mr. President, the Pakistan delegation highly appreciates your skilful leadership of the Security Council during this month and welcomes the opportunity to participate in a discussion on the Middle East situation. We listened carefully to the briefing provided by Under-Secretary-General Gambari.

Whatever one's political perspective, it is clear that the Middle East is a region in flames and on the edge of chaos. Last month, the world witnessed 30 days of cruel and unjust war which gave rise to a series of violations of the basic principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

The first of these was the use of disproportionate force. No military provocation by irregular forces can justify a full-scale attack and the destruction of a country whose national forces or authorities had no role in that provocation. We do not condone rocket attacks by Hizbollah which resulted in the loss of innocent civilian lives in Israel. At the same time, there can be no justification for bombardments whose victims were overwhelmingly innocent Lebanese civilians, including children and women. There can be no justification for the wanton destruction of the cities and infrastructure of a vulnerable country that was in the process of reconstructing itself from earlier conflicts and invasions into a peaceful, prosperous and democratic polity.

Secondly, the war witnessed gross and consistent violations of international humanitarian law — in Qana, in Tyre and in Beirut.

Thirdly, it witnessed what clearly appeared to be deliberate attacks against United Nations peacekeepers, in which four were killed. We trust that this will be fully investigated.

The fourth and most serious matter was the failure by the Security Council to discharge its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The world watched helplessly for 30 days as the bombs and rockets continued to rain down and kill innocent people.

The laboriously negotiated resolution 1701 (2006) was a better outcome than earlier proposals presented to the Council. It envisaged Israeli withdrawal, upheld Lebanon's sovereignty over all its territory and called for reconstruction. Yet, it was not the Security Council's finest hour. After 30 days of war, the Council's resolution could only call for a cessation of hostilities that was unequal and incomplete. The peace that has returned is fragile. It has been violated by one party, taking advantage of the ambiguity in resolution 1701 (2006). Similar ambiguity also plagues the plan to reinforce and redeploy the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). One thing is certain: the United Nations should not be expected to accomplish what could not be imposed by the resort to war. It is the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon, and of its armed forces, to establish its sovereignty over its own territory.

The international community must contribute actively to providing urgently needed humanitarian help to the Lebanese people, including food, shelter and fuel supplies. The naval blockade, combined with the destruction of Lebanon's land communications system, is a major impediment to humanitarian relief. The blockade should be lifted immediately. Lebanon's reconstruction too must be quickly accomplished, with the generous support of the international community. Pakistan will make its due contribution to Lebanon's reconstruction and revival.

It is also clear that this 30-day war has changed the strategic and political landscape in the Middle East. Perhaps the most far-reaching provision of resolution 1701 (2006) is found in its penultimate paragraph, which calls for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

It is absolutely clear, now more than ever, that none of the conflicts in the Middle East can be resolved by recourse to the use of force. Disproportionate military power cannot ensure the durability of a peace that is imposed against the will

aspirations and rights of a people. Even if put down once, they will rise and rise again in the legitimate quest for justice.

Clearly, the root cause of the Israeli-Lebanon conflict, the root cause of the Palestinian resistance and the root cause of suicide bombings and rocket attacks is Israel's 38 year occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories. The visible and often brutal suppression of the Palestinian people is also a principal root cause of the rise of extremism across the Arab and Muslim world and of the resort to terrorism. That political reality, however unpalatable, can no longer be ignored.

The structure of a durable peace in the Holy Land is already well known: the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. To realize that vision, the Security Council must secure the non-selective implementation of its own resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the provisions of the Arab peace initiative and the Quartet's road map.

The most urgent task is to halt the violence in Gaza and the West Bank, both Israeli attacks and Palestinian rockets. The captured Israeli soldiers should be released, but Israel must also release the hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese it holds, including many Palestinian ministers and parliamentarians. We hope the Palestinians will be able to unify their Government and security forces. We call on Israel to halt and reverse its settlement activity on the West Bank, to stop the erection of the separation wall and to end the economic and humanitarian blockade of the Palestinians. We urge the resumption of peace talks, without prejudice to the positions of either side. Those talks should lead to early agreement on a phased implementation of the agreed peace plan and the road map.

A parallel peace process should be revived between Syria and Israel and should lead to Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights and to a peace agreement.

No one can fail to note that today the problems affecting the Middle East extend beyond the area of the old Palestine Mandate. The peaceful resolution of the sectarian violence and the insurgency in Iraq requires cooperation on the part of all Iraqis, Iraq's neighbours and the international community.

It is Pakistan's hope that the peaceful resolution of the disputes in the Middle East will not be further hampered by arbitrary deadlines or precipitate action on other problems in the area. That could throw further fuel on the fire in this already inflamed region.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We listened very attentively to the briefing by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on the longest-running conflict on the United Nations agenda: the Israeli-Arab conflict, which is as old as this international Organization. We also listened carefully to the statements made by our colleagues, the representatives of States members and non-members of the Security Council, who were unanimous in emphasizing the central importance of establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East region on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. They were also unanimous in stating that the Palestinian question is the core of the Israeli-Arab conflict, not one of its details, as the Israeli representative tried in vain to suggest.

We are gravely concerned that the issue of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories continues to be on the United Nations agenda month after month and year after year without the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy aimed at putting an end to that blood-drenched occupation, which has continued for decades. That makes the United Nations, including the Security Council, responsible and accountable in the eyes of the peoples of many developing States, who find it difficult to understand the total lack of relevance to the effective mechanisms of the Charter and the inability to fully implement the will of the international community as represented in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), adopted 39 and 33 years ago, respectively. In fact, those resolutions have not been implemented on the ground because of a super-Power's blind support for the continued Israeli occupation and aggression. As all members are aware, that support is expressed in the United States delegation's use of the right of veto 43 times in the Security Council to protect Israel so as enable it to shoulder its responsibility to implement resolutions of international legitimacy.

In the unanimous view of the international community, Israel's continued occupation of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian territories is the real reason for the instability, lack of peace and escalating tensions in our region. The suffering of our peoples caused by the continued Israeli occupation and by a super-Power's support for that occupation — including providing it with the most sophisticated means of military murder — has become intolerable.

World public opinion has become aware of the magnitude of the Israeli State terrorism that for decades has targeted the Lebanese and the Palestinians. World public opinion has also become aware of a strenuous efforts made by a super-Power's politicians to obstruct the adoption of a draft resolution that would have achieved a ceasefire early in the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, and of the fact that, prior to that, the Permanent Mission of that State exercised the right of veto against a draft resolution condemning the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli-Arab conflict, which is an issue that threatens international peace and security, goes to the heart of the responsibilities of the Security Council. Israel's aggression against the peoples of the region and its occupation of our territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon cannot be concealed by the Israeli representative's efforts to transform that aggression and occupation into a 1950s Hollywood epic. Within the past two months, the Human Rights Council in Geneva, by an overwhelming majority, adopted two resolutions condemning the human rights violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, in Palestine and Lebanon. The Human Rights Council adopted those resolutions in the first two special sessions it has held since its inception.

The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2006/670), which comprises 65 paragraphs in 13 pages, mentions my country only twice, and then in positive contexts: first, when the Secretary-General states that 107,000 Lebanese displaced persons who sought refuge in Syria because of the recent Israeli aggression have returned to Lebanon; and secondly, when he refers to the assistance provided by Syrian authorities to Lebanese refugees in Syria. However, the Secretary-General's report mentions Israel by name dozens of times and indicates that it has violated resolution 1701 (2006), which the Security Council adopted only a few days ago. Indeed, the Secretary-General points out that Israel violated resolution 1701 (2006) several times only hours after its adoption.

The fact that the United Nations has adopted more than 1,000 resolutions condemning Israel by name and calling on it to put an end to its occupation of Arab territories in Syria, Palestine and Lebanon, to halt the building of its illegal settlements on Arab territories, to put an end to the continued Judaization of Arab Jerusalem, the burial of nuclear wastes in the occupied Syrian Golan and its continued disregard for the July 2004 advisory opinion of International Court of Justice and for General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 regarding the building of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory; all of that shows that Israel and its politicians are demons of international terrorism and hotbeds of falsehood and hypocrisy.

In that regard, it will suffice to state that, as everyone knows, the terrorism committed in 1996 by Israel in the first Qana massacre claimed the lives of 104 Lebanese civilians who had taken refuge in the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). That act of Israeli terrorism permanently disabled 25 Lebanese children. However, Israeli terrorism did not end there. In the second Qana massacre, earlier this month, Israeli terrorism was responsible for the deaths of those 25 handicapped children. Is that terrorism not demonic?

Those who provide the requisite support for Israeli terrorism — including absolute support for colonial settlement, occupation, aggression, the construction of the wall, the abduction of the members of a Palestinian Government elected through Western democratic standards and the arrest of the Speaker of the Palestinian parliament to try him before an occupying authority without legitimacy — bear the brunt of responsibility for the escalation and tension in our region. Our people, along with peace-loving people throughout the world, will not permit the transformation of our suffering and pain resulting from Israel's occupation, aggression and terrorism to become Hollywood spectacle from time to time. Although our option to choose peace is a strategic one, if it does not produce results, resistance will be the alternate option, as President Bashar al-Assad recently announced.

The peoples of our countries are not responsible for the failure of the policies of certain States that

consider themselves "super" in our region. We are surprised at the insistence of the capitals of those States on antagonizing our peoples and our peace-loving and open cultures. Fascism, Nazism, apartheid, Zionism and colonialism are neither Arab nor Islamic products. We as Arabs and as Muslims have participated in the writing of the most beautiful pages of human civilization. We have even invented some of the most important means for developing this civilization, in the service of all of humankind. Therefore, in our history we have never known the blind hatred exercised by some against our peoples and cultures. We regret that, for such hatred only serves to deepen conflict between peoples, rather than to promote dialogue and cooperation.

Israel's building and deploying of eight nuclear reactors — which produce plutonium for the manufacture of nuclear weapons — in an area no larger than 20,000 square kilometres is a terrorist act that the Council must address decisively and promptly. Certain major Powers have been breaching their international non-proliferation obligations for decades by providing Israel with nuclear reactors, heavy water, scientists and nuclear technology. Those Powers should ask themselves about their reckless and irresponsible policies, and oblige Israel to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and place its nuclear facilities under international supervision, with a view to putting an end to Israel's policy of nuclear terrorism in the region.

At their recent conference in Cairo, Arab foreign ministers emphasized the central role of the United Nations in finding a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the terms of reference of the peace process and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, especially resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the principle of land for peace. The Arab foreign ministers also decided to call upon the Security Council to meet at the ministerial level in September 2006 to consider a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict by the Security Council. They did so based on their belief in the need for the Council to assume the responsibilities entrusted to it vis-à-vis the protection and maintenance of international peace and security.

The Arab-Israeli conflict did not begin two months ago with the capture of an Israeli soldier in Gaza and two other soldiers in south Lebanon. It began decades ago and is, alas, as old as this international Organization. It is futile for the representative of Israel, or others, to obfuscate that point. The Arab-Israeli conflict began before Hamas assumed power through democratic elections in Palestine. The Arab-Israeli conflict began before the emergence of Hizbollah in Lebanon as a force resisting Israeli occupation, which has continued on Lebanese territory for 25 years despite the fact that the Council adopted resolution 425 (1978) in 1978.

Why has Israel failed for decades to accept the Arab hand extended to it in peace? What we know in that regard is that every time the Arabs have extended a hand in peace to Israel, the Israeli response has been negative, violent and terroristic. As we know, in the wake of the first Arab peace initiative, in Fez, in 1982, the Israeli response was to send Sharon to attack Lebanon and occupy Beirut. When the Arabs once again extended their hand in peace, in 1996, the result was that Israel once again attacked Lebanon and occupied parts of it. When at the Beirut summit in 2002 Arabs again launched a peace initiative, Israel's response, which came while Arab leaders were still in Beirut, was to carry out the Jenin and Nablus massacres.

Those have been Israel's responses to Arab peace initiatives. That is why we call upon the Council to address the Arab-Israeli conflict decisively and seriously at its upcoming meeting in September, when Arab ministers will be here to discuss the issue with the members of the Council to find a solution in accordance with binding international resolutions.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5516

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5516th meeting

Friday, 25 August 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President	Nana Effah-Apenteng	(Ghana)
Members	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Denmark	Mr. Haaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Tincopa
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Ansari
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Tai
	United States of America	Mr. Price

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) (S/2006/628)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-47873 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006) (S/2006/628)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Timor-Leste, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. José Luis Guterres, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Guterres (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2006/628 and S/2006/630, which contain the reports of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution [illegible] and on justice and reconciliation [illegible] respectively.

Members of the Council also have [illegible] document S/2006/686, which contains [illegible] draft resolution submitted by Japan.

I wish to draw the attention of the [illegible] Council to document S/2006/620, [illegible] dated 4 August from the Chargé d'affaires [illegible] the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste to [illegible] the Security Council, and documents S/[illegible]/605 containing letters dated 14 [illegible] respectively, from the Chargé d'affaires [illegible] the Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste [illegible] Secretary-General.

It is my understanding that the Council [illegible] to proceed to the vote on the draft [illegible] (S/2006/686) before it. Unless I hear [illegible] shall put the draft resolution to the vote [illegible].

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands in favour:

Argentina, China, Congo, Denmark, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1704 (2006).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5517

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 August 2006

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5517th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 28 August 2006, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record.

"At its 5517th meeting, held in private on 28 August 2006, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan'.

"The President extended invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations, His Excellency Mrs. Alice Mungwa, the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Wahab.

"The President extended invitations under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hedi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

"The members of the Council heard briefings by Mr. Hedi Annabi and Mr. Jan Egeland.

"Members of the Council, Mrs. Alice Mungwa, Mr. Yahya Mahmassani and Mr. Abdul Wahab had an exchange of views.

"Members of the Council would welcome further exchange of views, including with the Government of the Sudan, and at higher levels of participation of regional organizations."

06-48034 (E) 280806

United Nations S/PV.5518

Provisional

Security Council

Sixty-first year

5518th meeting

Tuesday, 29 August 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Sheikh Hilal Al-Khalifa	(United Arab Emirates)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Gombadis
	Denmark	Mr. Ludvig Andersen
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Pando
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Otaibi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Tai
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Letter dated 25 August 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/668)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-48104 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Letter dated 25 August 2000 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/888)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understandings reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2000/888, which contains the text of a letter dated 25 August 2000 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, and the President of the Security Council is receiving a letter dated 24 August 2000 from the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2000/890, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I call now upon those in favour of the draft resolution.

In favour: Argentina, Bahrain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1305 (2000).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.